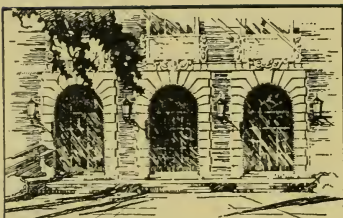


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HYDE MARSTON;

OR,

A SPORTSMAN'S LIFE.

BY CRAVEN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

The hero is born: a necessary prelude to his career—
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lady's stud of hunters—The hero's first field—Cresset
Pelham—The instinct of sporting—A promising child in
“the way he should *go*.”

“ Most epic poets plunge in ‘ medias res,’
 (Horace makes this the heroic turnpike-road),
And then your hero tells, whene’er you please,
 What went before, by way of episode.”

BYRON.

“ Youth, what man’s age is like to be, doth show,
We may our end by our beginning know.”

DENHAM.

HYDE MARSTON;
OR,
A SPORTSMAN'S LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

It is somewhere related that, in the genealogical roll of a certain Welsh baronet, towards the middle of the document, there is a note to this effect: "**About this period the world was created.**" Now, whether this was intended as a sample of *bonâ fide* chronology, or a spice of *mauvaise plaisanterie* upon the dealers in long-winded lineage, we will not stop to inquire. The anecdote, whatever its origin, contains a hint replete with good counsel. It is doubtful if, in dealing with the

ordinary affairs of life, the practice of beginning "*ab ovo*," in any case, will be found convenient. At all events, when the principle is applied, in literature, to works which come under the denomination of "light reading," it is an offence that "smells to heaven." When your author, be he biographer, novelist, or compiler of memoirs, introduces his heroine in swaddling clothes, or trundles in his hero in a go-cart, we hold tossing in a blanket to be infinitely too mild treatment for his case.

Having thus declared our opinion, the reader will be prepared for a narrative dashing at once, as Horace has it, into the pith of its subject. To the extent that the familiar may follow the heroic, he will not be disappointed. Still, to avoid the necessity of episode—an alternative from which neither the written nor the dramatic epic is exempt—we must crave patience while we offer a slight outline of those days in which the future casts its shadows before ; whose experience proves the truth of the assertion that "men are but children of a larger growth."

Never flowed more fresh and sparkling waters, never waved more stately woods, or bloomed more fair and fragrant lawns, than those which memory spreads before the recollections of my childhood. The old hall of B—— was the centre of these scenes. It had been for generations in the family, though, at different times, occupied by strangers, and a few months before my birth was taken possession of by my father, with a view to make it a permanent residence. As a rural home, few spots possessed more natural advantages. It was situated on the banks of the Severn, where that noble river waters one of the richest and most picturesque districts of Shropshire. The society in the immediate neighbourhood consisted of many of the best families in the county; and for the lover of the angle, the trigger, or the chase, nowhere in Great Britain was combined more attraction. During the best moiety of his life, my father had “lived in the world,” and at the worst side of forty married and surrendered himself to the country, and the cultivation of

letters : my earliest reminiscences, indeed, recall in him the ideal of “ a fine old English gentleman,” with powder on the roof of his head, a pigtail at its nether extremity, and a heart in the right place.

I was an only child ; whether the corollary common to such a condition was fulfilled in my instance will probably form the moral of this history. However that might have been, the medium through which I looked at life, even in its sunniest epoch, was not all *couleur de rose*. I cannot record at what period my cares commenced, because I cannot bring to mind any period when I was wholly exempt from them ; but their first chief agent I can well remember.

There was a certain little dry old man, with a protuberant ventricle, and no calves to his legs, who was wont to appear at B—— some three or four times a year. This was my mother’s only brother, a bachelor, with the reputation of being very rich ; moreover, he was my godfather, and, in addition to the usual promises pledged by such a functionary,

had intimated his intention of making me his heir. Sweet, unsophistic season! little did I dream, when first I heard of *my uncle's pledges*, what a different reading I was destined to gather from those words.

It was my eighth birthday: my godfather had arrived from London on the same morning, and when I was admitted to dessert, he was in animated debate with my father, on a point that speedily claimed my attention. "Well, Hyde; I wish you many returns of this anniversary, if you make good use of them. You young reprobate, what are you about? The boy has despatched a bumper of Madeira at a single pull! There now, take your fruit, but *don't* put *two* grapes into your mouth at once—and see, there, he's swallowing the skins, as I am a Christian sinner! But, brother, that a man of your experience should think of educating a son at home, whom he desires to see occupy a prominent place in society, passes my understanding. I should as soon have expected to have found you selecting a gamekeeper from behind a man-mil-

liner's counter. Send him to school, brother send him to a public school (I'll find one for him), and let him rough it. Would you stick a sapling of British oak into a flower-pot, and shut it up in a conservatory?"

This logic, such as it was, probably decided the fate of my after life: it certainly at once effected a revolution in the whole economy of my youthful days. At the expiration of the succeeding summer vacation, under the escort of old Moran, the butler, I was consigned to the Rev. Dr. Donne, head master of the grammar-school at Oswestry, then one of the first provincial establishments of the kind in England. If my little old uncle had turned the world inside out, he could not have selected a spot more devoted to the "roughing" system. The Doctor was a gentleman of unimpeachable integrity, of respectable classical acquirements, and as little infected by the silly weaknesses of human nature as a nigger-driver. His principle of instruction was founded on the axiom, that "if you whip a boy you are certain to make him *smart*."

Time and the hour have wrought many and blessed changes in the school discipline common to the commencement of the present century. Thank God! the days are for ever past when the youth of this land—men in minds, in feelings, in manners, and in the world's assent—were beaten like hounds, and loaded with indignities that, in the present day, dared not be offered to slaves!

But this is a digression. Returning to our school, it may be scarcely necessary to say that, in a few years, under such a system, I acquired a fair share of book learning, together with a proficiency in the science, or mystery, known as the care of number one. Civilization is described to be a social compact, in which men unite for the general comfort and security. If so, schools, in the days of which I write, were communities of savages. The first class tweaked the noses of the second, to teach them manners; the second extracted the hair of the third, to instruct them in the philosophy of despising pain; the third ate up all the victuals (at least all that were eatable) apper-

taining to the fourth, to accustom them to the virtue of moderation ; while any member of the upper school caused any member of the lower to thief, cheat, lie, or labour, as it might happen to suit his caprice or convenience. Every one's hand was against you, and your hand was against every one : it was " a part of the system ;" the head master knew it, and the ushers supported it in theory and practice.

Breaking bounds was a cardinal sin with the Doctor, and the consequence was that no one, of course, ever dreamt of keeping within the prescribed limits. " Creation's heirs — the world, the world was ours." We wandered all over the country : purchased rural produce, when in funds and the humour, and stole it when money or morals ran short. Was there a bear-bait, a bull-bait, a man-fight, or a cock-fight, base was the slave who saw it not.

Need I repeat that such a style of life enabled me to visit home, by the time I had entered my teens, with my weather-eye tolerably open, and quite as independent in spirit and bearing

as my little old uncle could anticipate or desire.

I can trace back to the first year of my school-days indications of the taste that has since mainly influenced my career. The point to which I most loved to wander, and where I loitered away many a summer hour, was the park at Porkington, the seat of the rich Welsh heiress, Miss Ormsby, who subsequently bestowed her hand and wide domains upon Major Gore. It was a noble sylvan region; but the metal that most attracted me was the stock of mares, and their produce, with which it abounded. Miss Ormsby was a graceful horse-woman, fond of hounds, bred all the horses intended for her own riding, and had, probably, the best stud of hunters of any lady in the kingdom. I have frequently seen her in the field, and there was that in her appearance and fashion of crossing a country, well becoming a high-born daughter of the land.

It was during one of these rambles, when I was eleven summers old, that the first incident of my sporting recollections occurred. There

had been that day a fair at Oswestry, from which a farmer who happened to overtake me was returning. He was leading by a halter a very handsome thorough-bred filly, which, however, went awfully lame before.

“ Farmer,” said I, “ you’ve not made much of your fair ; how could you expect to sell a nag with only three legs ? ”

“ She had four good legs when I took her to market,” said the man, in no pleasant tone, “ but a led horse kicked her on the shoulder, and, I’m afraid, has spoilt her for ever.”

We had some more conversation, in the course of which he gave me the name of his abode among the Montgomeryshire hills, and I promised, if chance ever brought me to his neighbourhood, to pay him a visit. Four years subsequently, accident threw the same man in my way. I inquired the fate of his mare, and learned from him that, having brought up three foals, she was as sound as when she was a foal herself. The consequence was, I went up to the mountains, looked her carefully over, coaxed her price from my

father, and took her home with me in the following midsummer vacation, when I left school "for good," as the boys have it.

As it is desirable to dismiss these tidings of my teens as laconically as may be convenient, I present myself, at the close of my fifteenth year, booted, breeched, and riding a rakish-looking, long-tailed, blood mare, to give rendezvous to the Shropshire, at Nescliffe—the half-way house between Oswestry and Shrewsbury. It was a soft November morning, and, as I was in advance of the hounds, my pace was as quiet as my nerves were restless. With a beating heart, and spirits that seemed as if they would fly away with me, I wended onwards, when a turn in the road brought me face to face with a strange-looking, gaunt man, bestriding a miserable hack—"arcades ambo." As his eye encountered me, he looked anxious, turned aside, dismounted, and, forcing himself through the hedge that skirted the road, sought to drag his Rosinante after him. The thing looked odd, but I was too intent on matters of interest to mind a trifle,

so I gave his steed a thwack on the crupper, that sent him through the quickset, and went on my way.

It was Mr. Cresset Pelham, at that time master of the Shropshire hounds, upon which he expended some thousands a-year, and would, at all times, go miles out of his line rather than even meet them upon the highway. Mr. Pelham, at the period I speak of, rented Shrewsbury Castle, where he kept his hounds and horses ; and a very sporting establishment it was. His pack was a clever one ; his hunters well selected, *and well paid for*, which I take to be the grand recipe for compounding a stud ; and his men, workmanlike fellows, in their *white* frocks, gave as spicy a finish to the whole turn-out as I have ever since seen in the field.

The meet had assumed a stirring appearance when I reached it, and was presently increased by the arrival of a barouche and four, containing the Duke of Rutland and Mr. Cecil Forester, his grace being, at the time, the guest of his brother-in-law, at Rossall. The

feelings of a young enthusiast in the noble science, for the first time in presence of Cecil Forester, at cover side, offer temptation to classical allusions, which I take credit to myself for having the virtue to withstand. We drew the hill behind the rock, known as Kynaston's Cave (the legendary residence of a celebrated highwayman of yore), and found almost on the instant.

The fox broke within reach of the thong of my whip; the hounds came out at his brush with a crash that would have put soul into a teetotaller (the animal was unknown in those days); then what effect was it likely to have upon a lad of fifteen, whose blood had been at boiling heat from the hour he drew on his boots? I felt as if my heart jumped out of my mouth. Already I had tasted my mare's quality, with the clipping pack of harriers kept, at the time, by Mr. Lloyd, of Aston; so, putting her head parallel with the line of chase, and bidding adieu to my senses, I blazed away, as if blown out of Perkin's steam-gun.

Three-and-twenty minutes of more resolute pace have not fallen to my lot since ; but, with a good start, the essence of Bedlam in my veins, and a thorough-bred one under me, I was third into the last field, the leaders being Mr. Forester and a Mr. Lewis Jones, a good sportsman, and a good man, although he *was* an attorney.

“ Youngster,” said the *maestro*, “ you’ve the gift of ‘ go ’ in you, and so has your nag, if you don’t pump her out ; go home and give her a week’s rest ; you shall have the brush, for you deserve it.”

Leonidas at Thermopylæ, Wellington at Waterloo, were, no doubt, uplifted in spirit ; but what were their feelings to mine, as I rode up the avenue of old limes, at B——, with the trophy in front of my bridle ?

That evening, as I recounted my exploits, to the proud sparkle of my father’s eye, and the chuckle of my uncle’s *barrique*, was one of the happiest of my life.

“ Well, Hyde,” said the former, “ I’m glad you’ve had so good a day ; but it’s almost a

pity you didn't wait for to-morrow at Shawbury White Gates; half the county, I hear, will be there to meet the Duke of Rutland."

Five minutes from the delivery of these words saw me closeted with the white-haired butler.

"Moran," said I, "you must help me to metamorphose my mare; I meet the Shropshire to-morrow, and I dare not let Cecil Forester see me on the same nag I rode to-day."

This was enough: my old ally set-to with a will; the switch tail was squared into a "bang;" the flowing mane shorn of its honours; and the rakish-looking bit of blood assumed the character of a sedate hunter. I was not among the latest of the arrivals at Shawbury, on the morrow. We had a quick find, and a quicker thing after it, racing our fox to Attingham Park, where he was run into in the open.

Modesty restrains my stating where I was during the run, but I was "thereabouts" at the finish. The "woo-whoop" was given, and we stood, the few *élite* of men and horses

panting, when I saw that Forester's eye was upon me: he looked an acknowledgment, and I heard him say to some one near him:—

“That boy went with the first flight yesterday and to-day—he *has the best pair of mares, of their inches, in the county.*” Of course, I had a lecture, on my return, on the inhumanity of riding my mare with hounds on two successive days. This I met with the best sophistry I possessed:—her well-seasoned age when put to work; the care with which I rode her; “and surely, papa, it was a feather to ride two clippers in company with Cecil Forester, and to jockey his judgment in horse-flesh into the bargain.”

“Won't do, Hyde,” said my father, shaking his head, but he looked far from out of humour, and I caught his whisper to my uncle, “The rascal *will* do yet—eh, Tom?”

“I think he will,” replied the little, dry old fellow, adjusting his napkin on the pile beneath his breast; “there is not a doubt of it. What a pity his father hasn't any more of him!”

CHAPTER II.

YOUTHFUL DAYS.

Home and its privileges—Tameness of modern comedy—Ireland twenty years ago—Access to Dublin—An adventure there—A wheelbarrow full of letters—Lundy Foot, poplin dresses, and Irish nags—Racing at the Curragh—Fitzmaurice Caldwell and Commodore Irwin—The Vice-regal court—An unorthodox bishop—Goulding's ride—An orthodox lawyer—An Irish horse auction—A groom for sale—"Dandies," *à l'Irlandaise*—Whisky punch—The bays of Dublin and Naples *par nobile*—A "Little" pathetic and emetic.

“Juan embarked—the ship got under weigh ;
The wind was fair, the water passing rough :
A devil of a sea rolls in that bay,
As I, who’ve cross’d it oft, know well enough.”

BYRON.

“Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an
acre of barren ground ; long heath, brown furze, any-
thing. The wills above be done ! but I would fain die a dry
death.”

Tempest.

CHAPTER II.

There is no event in the ordinary life of a youth of condition so akin to the transition from Purgatory to Paradise, as the change from a public school to the comforts and refinements of home. Instead of being roused out of a warm bed before the stars have left the sky, to grope for his shoes amid a heap of leather in every state of defilement, and being kicked into the yard, to wash his face at the pump, a well-ordered servant attends his summons at a Christian hour, and supplies the necessaries for his toilette. The breakfast table is no longer furnished with the bread of bitterness, neither is dinner a meal that would disgrace his father's kennel.

But enough of this; give me not gall for ink, oh! mine horn; smooth thy ruffled plumage, oh! my grey goose quill, and onward "to fresh fields and pastures new."

It is urged that a main reason for the tameness and insipidity of modern comedy is the uniformity of surface that pervades society, in consequence of the general diffusion of education, and the polish which is the attendant of advanced civilization. The argument is not a sound one, for where did the Comic Muse triumph so gloriously as during the most refined epoch of the Roman empire?

The fashion of our day, however (more or less influencing all classes), has established a code of manners, according to whose ordinances all social intercourse is carried on in masquerade. It is only in countries where an ultra-mercurial temperament causes men to cast aside their vizards (in spots which may be called the preserves of national and idiosyncratic character), that they appear as nature moulded them. Such was Ireland some twenty years ago. Such was Dublin, when "dust

Murphy" was the glory of College Green, and ere the Mendicity had laid waste her streets.

Let Erin remember the days of old,
When her shores with fun were teeming;
When the punch that was brew'd by her sons so bold
Was all that they knew of *steaming*.

What a revolution in geography has the last quarter of a century produced! Five-and-twenty years since, Dublin was less accessible to the people of England (the style, convenience, and certainty of transit being had in account) than New York and Boston are at the present hour. The old Holyhead road, with its items of Penmaen Mawr, and the ferries of Conway and Bangor, was a route abounding in discomfort and danger; while the passage from Parkgate or Liverpool, in a small cutter, whose sole accommodation consisted of a dark and dirty cabin, wherein all the passengers—men, women, children, and followers—ate, drank, slept, snored, sickened, and so forth, was an affair, as the polite novels

have it, “more easily imagined than described.”

Voyages of ten days and a fortnight were of ordinary occurrence between these latter ports and the Pigeon House, then the Irish metropolitan point of packet rendezvous. Does the reader hesitate at such an assertion having reference to a passage of 120 miles? What then will he say to the intercourse between England and the Isle of Man (a distance of only twenty-one miles), having been totally cut off for six weeks, within the last twenty years—a fact of which I was assured by a banker, at Douglas, who accompanied his statement by saying, that when the mail *did* arrive, his letters were conveyed to him from the post-office in a wheelbarrow !

But here, again, the besetting sin has lured me wide of my line. “Ye gods ! I grow a babbler.” Good brain, to thy fitting office : eschew digression, and spin a fair thread of narrative, while we our “plain unvarnished tale unfold.”

Some twenty springs ago (not to be fasti-

dious as to a year, more or less), during the interval between my removal from school and matriculation at Oxford, I made my *début* in Dublin. The embassy was one by no means out of the common routine. My business was simply to visit certain "dirty acres" (and, sure enough, all things considered, the phrase was no misnomer), in capacity of possessor in prospective; to purchase some "poplin" dresses for my lady mother (will any one oblige me with a reason for that species of *fabrique* being more rare in England than the produce of the Chinese or Persian looms?); to lay in "Lundy Foot" for the paternal, and lay out coin upon a couple of nags for myself; the latter infinitely the most important item in the catalogue.

On the week after my arrival, the Curragh April meeting occurred, and, notwithstanding the bombardment which poor Mrs. Trollope has suffered for burglaries on the sanctity of hospitality, I cannot choose but give a spice of life at —— Lodge, because there I tasted Irish character in a raciness of flavour beyond

which I do not think its relish could extend. The party assembled for the races consisted of Lords —— and ——; two Colonels C——; a few “civilians;” Captain Caldwell; and “Commodore” Irwin.

Nothing that the fiction of our day has ventured upon enables me, by comparison, to convey the slightest idea of the two last gentlemen. The former was called captain, I believe, from having held a commission in the navy; the latter “commodore,” because he had served before the mast on board a man-of-war. They were both, however, of good blood, the captain being brother to Sir John Caldwell, a baronet of large possessions in the north of Ireland, and the “commodore” a scion of a most respectable family in Sligo.

At the time I met them, they had quitted blue water for the short grass¹ (I won't pledge myself for their having abandoned “the fickle element”), and were, upon a large scale, masters of race horses. Fitzmaurice Caldwell was a martyr to the gout, which had wholly de-

¹ Hibernice, the race course.

prived him of the use of his limbs, and rendered him as helpless as a baby in arms. Of course, in the indigenous soil of waggery, he was too good a subject to be overlooked. As a sample of the pranks that were constantly being played upon him, one, the offspring of the meeting on the *tapis*, is not a bad specimen.

Our tar was sanguine of temperament, and, when crossed, not scrupulous withal about his parts of speech. Now it so chanced that one of his favourite horses was about to start, and all interested in the stable having accompanied him to the post, the captain was left alone in his glory.

“Will nobody put me on my pony?” sung out the indignant son of the sea. “Bl—d and ounds! will nobody give me a leg?”

The call was not unheeded. A Samaritan was soon at hand, who placed him in his saddle, but so that when the steed advanced the rider retrograded. Ah! ye gentle dames and cavaliers of Newmarket, whilom wont to gaze on Parson Harvey as an eccentric, what

had ye thought of old hard-a-weather Fitz, at best pace, "from the turn of the lands in," with a remorseless visage turned towards his galloway's tail, and swearing like an incarnation of the three regiments of Life Guards?

A rare evening for a youngster was that on which I found myself a member of the same mess with two such "gems of the sea" as the captain and "commodore" aforesaid. I cannot describe the "keen encounter of their wit" as "diamond cut diamond," because that figure might suggest a polish as appertaining to it, which, being a faithful historian, I am bound to confess it lacked. The substance of the issue related to a recent incident in the career of the "commodore," which, divested of its embellishments, was to the following effect:—

"May be, I wouldn't, Master Irwin: may be, I'd rather let it alone. D'ye think all's snug about Ballinafad, eh? [*Omnes!* 'Another devilled turkey, more claret, and let's have the humours of Ballinafad']. Well, ye shall hear how the 'commodore' carried all before him

on the strength of his own and his father's luck. It was not enough to win everything that he started for at the races, but he must clear the town out at hazard, as handsomely as if it had been sacked by pirates. Not a ten-penny bit was left to stand up for Roscommon, till an undertaker from Athlone stepped forward, to have a 'shy' for the honour of the county. A few throws demolished the schneider of wooden surtouts, who dropped his last stake, a hearse-and-four, by 'crabs' to 'seven's the main.'

"May be, the flag officer wasn't up in his stirrups!

"'Here, groom porter,' said he, 'bring a tumbler hot and strong: pockets, a full freight; funerals completely furnished; never say die!'

"The turn-out that left Ballinafad next morning was a cure for sore eyes. Many a jolly party travels in a mourning coach, but it's not every day one sees a man dance with a jig step to his hearse. Away they went, our friend here tooling his four-in-hand, and a batch of

‘Barony boys’ on the roof, as merry as butterflies in the sunshine.

“About a mile before they reached the ‘commodore’s,’ however, the sun gave them the slip, down came the rain in buckets, and, for once in their lives doing a sensible thing, the party got *inside*. A pleasant spectacle for Mrs. Irwin, with six small children, the reversion of a Connaught jointure, and the contingency of a spouse whose life might be worth twenty-four hours’ purchase—was a well appointed funeral advancing up the avenue. The lady swooned away, the babes lifted up their voices and wept, and terrible was the consternation of the household, till the real state of the case was developed, as the mourners entered, to the chorus of ‘We won’t go home till morning;’ while the corpse, energetically kicking the footboy, called to his widow to hurry dinner, and the orphans to bring him the materials for mixing the punch.”

In Dublin, Momus ruled supreme ; courtiers and *canaille*, all, from the castle to the cabin,

threw up their caps, and capered in his roistering train. *Apropos* of the castle : an incident occurred, a few years later, which may serve to illustrate the spirit which pervaded that merry semi-monarchy. During the viceroyalty of the Marquis Wellesley, it was my chance to be presented at one of his levees. Now, at that day, there was, among the Irish bishops, a most excellent prelate, whose patronymic was Alexander, and, had the distinction of "the Great" been appended to it, no one could have disputed his claim to the title. Many more corpulent men than the Bishop of Meath I have seen, but, taken all in all, I should say he displaced a greater column of atmosphere than any two of his contemporaries. If you caught sight of him going before the wind, with his canvas free, he was a wonderful creature !

On the occasion in question, it fell to my lot to approach the august circle, immediately before the right reverend father, who, probably, went to scale his hundred weight for every stone of fourteen pounds that I could bring to

the steelyard, to say nothing of his canonicals, that spread him out to the size of a decent cathedral.

The crowd was great, and the aides-de-camp assiduous in keeping it moving. As I placed my card in the hand of the official, whose affair it was to announce those who approached the presence (I think it was Sir Stewart Bruce), the *bishopric* that followed me also delivered his pasteboard. Whether it was from actual botheration, or prepense devilment, must ever remain a secret ; but as I paused before the viceroy, in the act of accomplishing my best reverence, a sonorous and deliberate voice exclaimed, “The Bishop of Meath.”

If the ghosts of Joe Grimaldi and Jack Reeve had appeared in my stead, the demonstration could not have been more intense. The Lord Lieutenant, the Lord Chancellor, all the lords spiritual and temporal, privy councillors, aides-de-camp, pages, the whole Irish government, burst out in an explosion of laughter ; while, with just wits enough to keep my sword from between my legs, I effected an

exit, that furnished the true reading of "*nolo episcopari*."

Where the whole business of life was transacted by agents, *têtes montées*, I shall be believed, without much argument, when I say that, out of Bedlam, I never foregathered with anything human like the hangers-on of the horse auctions. The Irish metropolis could scarce boast a dealer of the most limited pretensions to character; the commission stables were too hot for a salamander, and the public buyer had nothing left for it but the auction yards. Of these there were but two or three: the longest established, and the most distracted, being "Goulding's Ride," in South Anne Street. Thither, intent on pleasing my fancy to the extent of "three figures," should the chance offer, did I bend my way.

There never was a spot under smaller obligations to situation or appearance. It was a narrow lane, as full of mud as a scavenger's cart in November, and, save a little straw in a state of decomposition, there was not the vestige of any thing professional about it. On

inquiring for Mr. Goulding, I was answered by a party, with an unexceptionable purple nose, who announced himself as that functionary.

“I’m come to look at your horseflesh,” said I ; “got a good nag among to-day’s lot?”

Ere he answered my demand, Mr. G. assisted himself to a handful of “blackguard,” thereby affording time to take measure of me from keelson to top-gallant-mast-head. Having completed the survey, he led the way into a dismal cut-throat alley, observing, “I think we can *shoot* you, sir ;” and certainly there was cause for supposing he meant to execute his promise. The style of cavalry here was no go.

“You must rise a peg higher,” said I : “though I *am* English, you must bait better, if you expect me to bite.”

He now approached a more Christian looking edifice, which we entered, passing two persons engaged in emphatic debate at the door. One of the pair was a hale, jolly-visaged countryman, in a huge grey frieze sur-tout, and corduroy breeches unbuttoned at the knees ; the other an epitome of his species, in

a suit of black far from new, and a face with an oil-of-vitriol expression.

“Mr. Mac-a-Nulty,” the former was observing, “I sould ye my harse, and what would ail me. I expected to be ped. But, signs on it, you were an attorney, and, in coorse, ye done me. Well, I’ll not throw good money afther bad; keep him, and the divil’s luck to ye with him; but, if I can’t get the price out of ye, I’ll never meet ye but I’ll make ye blush, any how.”

“Don’t be impertinent,” responded the legal gentleman, while his small red eyes glistened like a ferret’s; “don’t be insolent, sirrah! or may be you’d be sorry. If you have a claim against me, proceed, and, perhaps, you may get it; but, as to making me *blush*, unless you serve a month or six weeks’ notice, I think it’s likely ye may be disappointed.”

In this stable there was a very clever chestnut horse, and a grey galloway mare, that took my attention. I asked Goulding what were their prices, but he did not know, as they had come in from the country but an hour or two

before, with a message to the effect, that the proprietor would follow them.

“The groom is here somewhere,” remarked my conductor: “I dare say he knows all about them.”

After a search he was found, as fast asleep as a church, in the grey mare’s manger, whence I put him up, and began my interrogatory.

“What do they want for the hackney?” said I.

“The lot is not to be separated, sir,” was the reply; “it’s warranted sound and gentle, and the price is £100 for the whole.”

“Why, the whole is rather limited,” I rejoined; “you mean the chestnut there, and this grey; they are but two items?”

“There are three of us altogether,” was the answer; “*plaze your honour, I’m one of the nitemes.*”

I looked at the fellow to see if he was hoaxing me, but his countenance was the index to a mind of grave intent.

“It’s perfectly true, sir,” he continued, observing that I regarded him with a grin of

incredulity; "master sells us in a lump, or not at all."

"We'll wait till your master makes his appearance, then," said I; "you're a queer party, beyond a doubt."

Stragglers, loungers, and blackguards of every degree, had, by this time, begun to assemble in the "Ride," in anticipation of the auction, and its "humours." I take the occasion afforded by the interval to give a sketch of one destined to fill a place in these memoirs.

The eccentric horse-boy, who, like Don Juan's friend Jackson among the Turks, stood, "wishing to G—d that somebody would buy him," in all the properties of frame, except in height, was an adult. His utmost altitude, however, was four feet in his boots, so that, seen in certain positions, he might pass for a boy of twelve years old. But his eye was lit by a shrewd intelligence, and his carriage betrayed that union of strength and agility which belong not to extreme youth. John Maher, as he informed me subsequently, was "born

and bred," to use his own expression, in Lord Rosmore's racing stables.

He had ridden some of his lordship's light weights ; but, as the period to which his service at the Curragh had reference agreed with that in which there occurred some mistake in the chronology of that nobleman's stud, very probably he got his dismissal in consequence of there being "no effects" in his department. By some accident he had contrived to pick up the elements of a fair education : he could read and write well ; and, in the ratio that art had benefitted him one degree, nature had gifted him fifty-fold. After many vicissitudes, he settled down into the situation whence I derived him, of which I shall come to speak presently.

The hour when Goulding's auction commenced had now arrived, and the scene, and its *dramatis personæ*, were by no means such things as one meets with every day in the year. The leading parts were filled by the Dublin "bucks," a particularly unprepossessing body. These young gentlemen had

the appearance of being clad in garments worn by London young gentlemen six years before ; moreover, they were remarkable for soiled linen, swaggering carriages, and dreadful countenances.

Next in concatenation were the men of business, chapmen in miscellaneous cavalry *the better* for some half dozen “dandies” of whisky-punch each, looking as wise as owls, and speaking oracularly. Their habits were gregarious, and, as you observed the company, two dilemmas suggested themselves: the first was, how they might contrive to buy, their outward seeming of worldly substance being probably as meagre a sample of portable capital as the same number of civilized mankind ever exhibited ; the second, having bought, what they managed to do with their merchandize, for as to purchasing a horse from an individual of such a party, a reasonable being might as soon be expected to cultivate business with a Jew attorney.

The chorus consisted of a phalanx of youths, who miraculously, as it were, avoided any

overt act of indecent exposure, at the same time solving indisputably the secret as to what the English beggars did with their cast-off clothes. The auctioneer entered his rostrum, a ground-floor window, from which casement and appurtenances were removed, and the word was given.

“Bring forth the horse.” The steed was brought — yes! brought is the word: the nether moiety assisted by a quarter of a pound of spice beneath the tail, while a stunted giant, who *seemed* to lead him, carried his fore-quarters.

“Trat him down the ride, Barney,” said Mr. Goulding.

“Lave the way,” was the reply, and the movement was executed.

“Will any gintleman make me a beginning for the brown Soordsman horse, warranted quite to ride, no better to draw a jaunting-car, and to do a day’s hunting? Barney, you blaggard, throw a leg over him, and let’s have a taste of his motions.”

Done as soon as said. Barney, with the

fragment of a hare's-skin cap stuck on the side of his head, a pair of cracked corduroys suspended from one shoulder, the semblance of stockings hanging about his ankles, and a spur like a spit on his left heel, was tossed up in a jiffy, and, giving his courser a "gaff of the galvanizer," launched upon the adventure.

The lane in which these exploits were performed was, as I have said, not particularly clean; the "ride" was paved with round stones, and the surface, from the effects of constant friction and profuse moisture, as slippery as ice. Fancy a gallop upon a bare-backed cripple, under such circumstances. You imagine the climax arrived?—little know you of Irish horse-jobbing.

"Now, then," observed the seller, inhaling his "high-toast," and holding out the box politely to a neighbour, "let's have a lep (leap) out of him, any way: hould up the bar."

This was a command that needed no repetition: fifty volunteers seized a piece of strong

timber, and placed it across the ride, at an elevation of five feet.

“Arrah ! is it game you’re making of me,” shouted Barney, “that ye be houlding it the hoith uv a fender ? up wid it like min, an, be cripes ! here goes.”

The insensate wretch kept his ghastly word, and I turned from the sight, for it made my flesh creep.

The party for whom I waited having arrived, I lost no time in entering upon my affair. He was a clergyman of the name of Dunn, to the best of my recollection, and was equally ready. The horse and mare, he told me, were the property of his son, without whose knowledge he had sent them for peremptory sale. In fact, the son was of too sporting a turn for the parson : he had been running steeple-chases, my friend, the *vendor-de-se*, acting as trainer and jockey, thereby filling the reverend gentleman with trouble and disquietude.

“Take the three off my hands,” said he, “and you shall have them for £100 ; but

Maher *must* go with the lot, or he'll be at home as soon as I am, and all will be sixes and sevens again."

The groom was as passive in the matter as the horses, so, a receipt being drawn specifying the whole of the consideration, the money was paid, and the bargain concluded. Green as was my experience, I could see I had got one clever item in my lot, the first ten minutes I passed in the same stable with it.

My leave of absence was nearly expired; and, as I should have no immediate chance of testing the quality of the remaining portion, I had Maher summoned to my room on the following morning, and questioned him on the subject, premising that, as a lie could do no harm or good, he might as well tell the truth.

"Why, then, by this good daylight," said the little man, drawing his hand over the sleek covering of his forehead, "and on my oath, a better pair of nags never fell in my way yet, and I've lived among the kind they come of,

since I was the size of a turf. The horse is as true a hunter as ever carried honest heart; and as for the mare, keep the hard road under her, and ye can't bate her in a summer's day—no, not in twenty-four hours—you can't, by Jas—!”

“Maher,” I interrupted, “there is no necessity for expletives. I believe you without them, and remember, swearing is strictly prohibited at B——.”

“I humbly crave your honour's pardon,” replied the small Milesian, somewhat chap-fallen. “I'm much indebted to your honour for the rebuke: it's a bad practice, and often his riverence, old Mr. Dunn, told me the same: the divil another—that is, *not* another oath shall ye hear out of my mouth; from this hour I have done with swearing, I have, by Ja—! I mane, that's a fact.”

On a brilliant fresh May morning, I took leave of Dublin, and proceeded to Howth, whence the Holyhead packets had commenced running. The vessel, whose turn it was to

sail, was commanded by poor Skinner,¹ with whom I lived for many years afterwards on terms of uninterrupted friendship. There he was, with his jolly, good-natured face, and solitary arm, bidding welcome as each arrived, and looking as if nature had moulded him to alleviate the misery with which he lived in hourly contact.

The wind was at S.S.W., so we had smooth water until Howth was cleared, and we opened the bay. It is the fashion for travellers to compare the bay of Dublin to that of Naples : unless upon Fluellin's principle of there being "salmons in both," I cannot propound the cause. In the latter, the most striking feature is the fair city, spreading in beauty and in sheen, as if to welcome the weary wanderer of the seas ; while, from the former, the town whence it derives its distinction is about as

¹ This ill-fated gentleman was lost a few years ago, in the Bay of Holyhead, being washed off the deck of his vessel in a heavy gale of wind, long after his arduous and lengthened services should have procured for him the privilege of a well-endowed retirement.

visible as Timbuctoo. And, oh! Sicilia! the bright, the odorous, shall the daughters of Proserpina rank with the fish-fags of Ring-send? and Ætna, the flame-crowned, with Howth, the fog-crowned?

“ On the top of whose big hill
St. Patrick preach'd a sarmint,
That drove the frogs out of the bogs,
And bothered all the varmint.”

But the Bailey Head recedes from our clipping cutter, and lurch after lurch announces her arrival in open water. Anon are heard faint coughs, followed by sudden changes of posture; and many that, till now, had shewn bravely, are seen no more.

Among the passengers, the most distinguished were a noble marquis, well known for his princely patronage of letters and the arts, his accomplished lady, and —— “ the young Catullus of his day.” With the frank courtesy which ever accompanies the really illustrious and the noble of spirit, the marchioness had entered into a conversation with

me, in the midst of which she discovered that the deck was absolutely abandoned.

“ Ah! where is poor Moore?” she exclaimed; “ do go below and see how he is; tell him I have sent you to inquire what he is doing in the cabin, and if he is composing any thing.” I was speedily at the side of the prostrate poet’s berth, where, like Don Juan’s tutor, he lay “ sick and speechless on the billow.” Gently, and with much compassion, I did my errand, and offered what solace I might to the miserable child of the Muses.

“ Go, ingenuous youth,” he slowly articulated, and the thick drops of agony rolled down his forehead—“ go, I pray thee, and leave me to my sorrow; and say to Lady L—— that, woe is me! I cannot compose—not even my own stomach.”



CHAPTER III.

ALMA MATER.

Holyhead—The South Stack—The wind a rude sculptor—Holyhead Road—Women, wine, and wassail in Anglesey—Home—An Irishman's opinion of England—Oxford and its economies—Love in a cottage—Leave taking—Passing the Rubicon of life—How they live at the seat of learning—A touch of “the ribbons”—A trifle of fox-hunting—Dunning—How to muster miscellaneous silver—*The* tobacconist—A bolt in *a* boot—A pair in a mess—A sentimental introduction to the metropolis.

“ While I play the good husband at home, my son and
servants spend all at the university.”

SHAKSPEARE.

“ For there one learns—’tis not for me to boast,
Though I acquired—but I pass over that,
As well as all the Greek I since have lost :
I say that there’s the place—but *verbum sat*.”

BYRON.

CHAPTER III.

The similarity in the approaches to the harbours of Howth and Holyhead is so identical, as to be actually startling; and yet it is a fact, that I do not remember to have seen it alluded to by any of the tourmakers who have passed between Mona and the land of the Shamrock. Sailing from the latter, by this route, on the S. W., you have the dark, cloud-capp'd hill of Howth, at the extremity of which, jutting into the sea, rises a semi-isolated rock, called "the Bailey Head," crowned with its lighthouse. As you enter the bay of Holyhead to the S. W., towers a bleak and frowning mountain-range, known as "the South Stack," which terminates in a

bold insular promontory, united to the main by a bridge of ropes : upon this stands the South Stack light, a visit to which is (or was) one of the excursions of mark for the curious or weather-bound, in the Ultima Thule of the ancient Britons.

A nine hours' voyage, with a fresh breeze and plenty of white water, placed us upon the quay at "the Head," in the midst of a volley of inhuman Celtic and Milesian, awful for its depth and energy. The former "touted" for Spencer's hotel—the latter for "the Hibernian : " rival caravanseries.

Having despatched an early dinner, and started my cavalry for Bangor, I fired a cigar, and took my way for the bridge, by a path that would have delighted Salvator. The scene might have answered for the incantation in "Der Freischutz,"—the cormorants and screaming seabirds doing duty for the demon babes and sucklings encased in leather and painted canvas, that entranced the town in the palmy days of Mr. Arnold and the English Opera.

As evening approached, the fresh breeze of noon grew into a storm, while something that waved in the distance, uncommonly like a petticoat, by no means took away from the romance of the affair. A flight of some three or four hundred steps, cut in the living rock, leads to a small platform, whence is thrown a rope-ladder, forming the only communication with the islet whereon the lighthouse stands. Through the gorge over which this frail and perilous bridge passes, when the wind comes from seaward, and the weather is rough, boils and roars a terrific surf. On the brink of this cauldron stood a group of my fellow voyagers of the morning — among them an Irish dean, with his youthful and pretty daughter. The passage being an essay of considerable risk and inconvenience, and of no possible service, of course I entered upon it on the instant ; accomplishing the feat by sheer chance, and effecting cruel damage to every inch of broad-cloth about me, as a physical certainty.

There are green spots, as we read, "amid desert centuries," and there was a spot—not a green one, indeed—on this bit of memory's waste that I cannot leave unsung. I was the last to commence the retreat, and consequently occupied the extreme rear of the party returning. About half the ascent was accomplished, and I had just reached the reverend dignitary's fair daughter, when rude Boreas overtook us with a blast, that would have blown a marlin-spike into a shaving-brush, as Jack says.

"I fear," said I, "you find this wind a rude sculptor." Ere she could reply, came a gust that threatened to tear up the rock on which we stood, and that *did* tear up the flowing drapery whose waving graces had lured me over the mountain. "*Fatimas*" being at that epoch unknown, the catastrophe is easily imagined; I venture but to hint at it. Years afterwards I met the Eve of my story, surrounded by a blooming family, at the house of a friend.

“ I think,” she observed, “ this is not the first time of our meeting : did you ever see me before ?”

“ I have had that pleasure.”

“ Where ?”

“ Half-way up the flight of steps on the South Stack.”

Talk of Eastern roses, and the sunsets of the tropics !—when I want to recall the *beau ideal* of a blush, I think of my last Tyrian glimpse of the fair Irish matron.

The axiom, that the germ of decay is at the core of perfection, was, at the hour of which I write, on the threshold of proof at Holyhead. The magnificent Irish road, from Shrewsbury, had already advanced rapidly in its progress, and, when finished, with the suspension bridges of Conway and Bangor, presented the most splendid highway of modern construction. The system of railway travelling began, however, to be canvassed before its completion ; the result need not be told. That one man's *bonne bouche* is another man's dose, was about to be exemplified in our in-

sular Taffies, who now, while “the rail” is flooding Liverpool with marrow and fatness, saunter in despair around their empty quays, and flavour their rye-crusts with the memory of departed leeks.

Bleak and barren as I found nature in Anglesey, in her *morale* she was cordial and kind almost to prodigality. The houses of the gentry were rendezvous for good fellowship; every lord of the soil, almost without exception, was a sportsman; and, as for pretty women, it was a Houris’ paradise! The island possessed a capital pack of harriers, and the hares being remarkable for their stoutness and straightforward running, the sport was first-rate.

There was a great deal of interest and character about the celebration of the Hunt Week, a festival held at Beaumaris at the commencement of the season. It opened with a procession, consisting of the servants of the hunt in new appointments, followed by the hounds, and attended by the members in scarlet—the uniform of the club. To these succeeded the

equipages of the leading families of the neighbourhood, while the windows of the little capital were filled with as much beauty and style as might have furnished a place of far greater pretension.

And then there was feasting and fêting; and though the ultra-fastidious may feel inclined to hold Welsh society cheap, let me assure them there are worse things in this wicked world than the maidens and the muttons of the Principality. As these recollections require to be classed with some regard to chronology, I pass onward, for the present, to resume, peradventure, some further reminiscences of Cambria.

How cheering and soul-contenting is a return to home! No matter how full of success our career in life: though courts open at our approach, senates hang upon our words, or camps echo with our glory, the applause of the world has not a tone that appeals to the recesses of the heart so irresistibly, as when

— “the watch-dog’s honest bark
Bays deep-mouth’d welcome as we draw near home.”

And such was my reception at B——. My passage up the old avenue of limes was saluted by a chorus of joyous throats; little dogs and all lifted up their voices; while the governor was at the portal, his venerable head uncovered, with an outstretched hand, and a warm heart in it, and his respectable pigtail oscillating to the gale.

Long before the dinner-bell rang, many a suspended friendship was renewed, and cordial greeting offered. It is hardly necessary to say, that the stable was *not* the last spot to which my *devoirs* were paid; nor was the sight of my little Irish groom, and pair of nags safe and sound within it, the least grateful object my survey furnished. I closed the door, and, as we were alone, inquired—

“How he liked England, and what he thought of his new home?”

“Ireland, sir,” he replied, “is a misfortunate land; where the poor live upon their own fat, and wages are paid with a whack of a black thorn. But this is a blessed country; they clap supper before you, when

there is not as much room in your inside as would stow away the baiting of a mouse-trap. Sure it was by the blessin' of the Virgin I met with yer honour, and yer honour's father's honour, an ould gentleman the saints take to glory! His voice would 'tice a colt from its corn, and his smile is as soft as a satin jacket. —How do I like the hall? It's paradise it is, by the holy——I mane, that's a fact."

The evening was passed *tête-à-tête* with my father, my mother being at Brighton, and the house without guest of any kind. He was as kind and choleric as ever, and talked over my approaching removal to Oxford with particular emphasis.

"You'll go to the d——l," he observed considerably, "of course; every body does who enters: a pair of horses, and a taste for coaching and cigars, will also help you considerably. Uncle Tom, I suppose, furnishes the sinews of war: a handsome campaign, no doubt, it will be. In negotiating with your tailor and wine merchant, do me the favour to forget you have a father: it is an honour that

I can struggle to dispense with. But don't be deceived about Tom : he *may* die, as it is said to be so appointed to all men : probably he *will* ; but no trifle will push him from his stool, I can tell you. He was here at Easter ; went to bed the night preceding his departure on a couple of pounds of toasted cheese, and in the morning, while his traps were packing, disposed of a quarter of a yard of sausages, to keep the wind out of his stomach."

The interval between my return from Ireland and my departure for the University was frequently enlivened by disquisitions, or rather monologues, akin to the foregoing. But leisure was also found for more pleasant occupations. I had, in the past season, discovered that the fishing in the Severn was admirable, from more causes than the quality of the sport.

About three miles up the stream from B——, the river, in its windings, formed itself into numerous deep, still pools, that abounded with trout, and often held a salmon. Moreover, on the adjacent bank, there stood

the prettiest cottage in the country, wherein dwelt two of the prettiest girls in the world. Caroline and Charlotte G—— were the daughters of Major G——, a gentleman who had earned a great deal of fame, but very little else. In short, he was a poor soldier, who had transformed his sword into a ploughshare; but, unfortunately, like *Alen-a-Dale*, “had no furrow for turning.”

Still, straitened means had not shorn him of his proud spirit, nor of his independence of character. People knew nothing about him, save that, whatever his income might be, he lived scrupulously within it, and that his daughters were as elegant and accomplished as they were beautiful.

Chance led me to angle in the neighbourhood of Major G——’s cottage, and accident made me acquainted with its inmates. That knowledge once gained, fate or destiny, I suppose, must be charged with the rest. During the summer, my visits were as many as the welcome with which they were received was frank and cordial. The truth cannot be con-

cealed ; upon the boy had fallen the trance of the soul, and visions of fairy hopes peopled love's young dream.

In disposition, as in person, the sisters differed widely. Caroline, the eldest, was a *brunette*—tall and graceful, sanguine and enthusiastic. Charlotte was a gentle, fragile *blonde*—tender, timid, confiding :

“ Heart on her lips, and soul within her eyes.”

Such was the Charlotte of my Werter. But my passion evinced none of the morbid sentiment of the pensive German. Life was in its fresh spring-time—flowery, joyous, and hopeful ; the spirit buoyant as the step elastic. I knew care but by name.

Thus passed that summer—an episode in the drama of my existence, on which haply I do not dwell as much as is meet, for it had an influence that no after event exercised on my fortunes. The day preceding that on which I was to leave for Oxford arrived, and, towards the evening, I rowed up in my wherry, to pay a parting visit to the Major and his

daughters. Imagination has so much to do with all that interests, indeed all that belongs to the dawn of our career, that when the twilight of our days stretches its shadows around us, we desire, in vain, to recall a beam of its radiance. Such I find the case when memory wanders into the past, in relation to all save the last few hours of that visit. Let but the slightest memorial arise, and the scene is before me, filled with all that, in "lang syne," threw a halo over it. But I must not dwell on these recollections: the catastrophe will hereafter strike, and rudely, some of the chords of feeling that then made music to my heart.

The moon floated full over the sleeping waters of the Severn. The autumn eve scattered its fragrance, as incense, on a spot that might have served for a paradise of pure and holy spirits. I descended to my boat with one of the fair sisters on either side: a hurried adieu, filled with hopes and promises, was spoken. I entered my little vessel, and with one lusty pull she was clear of the bank

At that moment a slip of folded paper fell at my feet. I placed it in my breast, and was soon flying with the current. My first impulse, on reaching home, was to read my *billet* :—

“ A myrtle round my window twines,
And blooms in beauty there,
When sunlight in its glory shines,
Or storms are dark and drear.
Thus ever cherished as thou art,
Alike in weal or ill,
Near or apart, one constant heart
Shall cling around thee still,
Dear love!
Shall cling around thee still.

“ When summer smiles, a gentle bird
Sings at my lattice frame ;
When winter frowns, its note is heard
To warble still the same ;
Thus loved and cherished as thou art,
Alike in weal or ill,
Near or apart, one constant heart
Shall cling around thee still,
Dear love!
Shall cling around thee still.”

Thus had a maiden told the story of her

heart; how truly the prophecy was fulfilled will form not the least grateful recollection of these pages.

The auspicious day had arrived in which I was to put off the chrysalis of boyhood, and go forth in freedom, one of creation's lords. Peradventure, it may not be without interest for posterity to be informed how a youth of the nineteenth century entered upon his campaign at *Alma Mater*. I will furnish an example that may serve for an illustration.

The first dawn was yet at issue with night, when I found myself in the stable, busied in arranging the order of march for my advanced guard. A strapping chestnut hunter, with knee-caps on, was already caparisoned for travel; a snaffle, and leading-rein attached, together with a halter, formed his head-gear. His load was ample, consisting of a saddle, various bridles, a profuse supply of clothes, and a pair of saddle-bags, the whole covered with oilcloth, most artistically fitted. In the next stall, secured by the rack-reins, was a clever grey hackney, her mane receiving a

finishing touch from the groom, whose boots, spurs, and overalls, proclaimed that the hour had come in which he was to take the road.

In a few minutes the detachment was on its way; the tall hunter striding proudly and carelessly onward, while the spruce hackney, bestridden by her light and practised jockey, seemed to skim over the surface with the grace and buoyancy of the dew, which the sun had just summoned from its couch in the valley.

At the door of the hall stood a carriage, receiving the *impedimenta* of the main body. The old butler, assisted by the whole force of the establishment, was laying in *matériel* enough to have renovated Troy in the tenth year of her siege. Guns and pistols—double-barrelled, plain-bore, and rifle—gunpowder, a curious and profuse supply; and shot, suited to anything from a condor to a humming-bird, were being stowed away. Here was a little forest of fishing-rods, cricket-bats, four-horse “crops,” coursing-poles, and boot-trees; there, preserved pineapple, home-potted trout,

quince marmalade, woodcock pies, and cherry bounce, sufficient to astonish the corporation of Bristol. Add to these, box-coats and "poodle-Benjamins," cigar cases, and meer-schaum pipes; two or three broad-brimmed hats, a handful of Welsh wigs, and a brace of bull-terriers, and you have an outline of the style of outfit appertaining to a gentleman-commoner of either university twenty years ago.

At an ample bay-window, looking upon these preparations, were the father and son. The breakfast-table, from which they had arisen, exhibited not its wonted appearance. Instead of the usual *débris* of fish, flesh, and fowl, the equipage and victual were undisturbed: the guests shewed not a similar composure. Care and anxiety were on the brow of the one—hope and light-heartedness in the bearing of the other. The scene was painful—fortunately it was brief; the word was brought that "all was ready;" the father's cheek grew pale—flushed—he felt the trembling hand with which his boy's farewell

grasp was given. The son's heart throbbed tumultuously—there was a mist on all he gazed at, for his eyes, as his heart, were full.

“Adieu, God bless you, my dear, dear father ;” thus spake Hyde Marston : a bound placed him in the carriage ; the lads cracked their whips, four good posters soon cleared the avenue, and dashing through the lodge-gates, launched him upon the great ocean of life—“lord of himself.”

It is Bulwer, I think, who says that Oxford is the place where the student soon finds out that learning is *not* better than house and land. If he has not previously made the discovery, certainly he is not likely to remain long in ignorance within the precincts of that learned city. As occasional allusions will occur, which might involve those who have long since become “grave and reverend signors,” it may be as well not to name the particular college of which I became a member, but simply to state that I did not reside within the walls, but occupied the rooms of a perfumer in High Street.

Being already known to T——, of Oriel, the two S—s of Christchurch, and a few others of the right sort, it took me but little time to get under weigh, and in a month my trim and style of sailing might vie with that of the fastest clipper of Isis. Probably there was not a set at *Alma Mater* less troubled with the slows than that of which I had been enrolled a member. The base and sordid are wont to illustrate a free spirit by the figure of “burning the candle at both ends;” there was not an individual of our society who would have hesitated for an instant in setting fire to all the tallow Russia ever produced, to light himself across a gutter.

It wanted yet a couple of months of the hunting season; autumn was still in its prime, and “men” occupied themselves, according to their tastes, with the river or the road. Towards the latter my bias inclined, and with T——, of Oriel, to drive “against me,” as partner, I went to work on the *Veteran*, under the auspices of George Flowers, a tolerable coachman, a Lothario of the first water, and regius professor of beer and tobacco.

The “ road ” was at this period rapidly approaching that perfection which it only attained to become a portion of the things that were. From its central situation, Oxford was a *focus* for coach-travelling, and the scene in the corn-market, at noon, was probably without a parallel of its kind. Here, with six horses, and as many tons of luggage about it, was seen some ponderous night “ heavy,” rolling up to the Star ; and there, one of the flying Cheltenhams, glancing like a meteor after its ten minutes’ luncheon at the Angel. It was a spectacle that—woe is me!—we shall look on no more ; neither shall such even be compassed in imagination by future generations of loco-smoko-motives.

But pleasant as were these things, they did not engross all my time or attention. There was a space devoted to reading (in the ratio of Falstaff’s bread and sack, I confess), and there were visits to Woodstock and Nuneham ; brushing gallops, as earnest of the future, upon Shotover, or meditative wanderings in Witchwood Forest. Ay, even so—hours devoted to many and deep thoughts of the

past; albeit the boy's life might scarce seem to have furnished food for musing, or melancholy retrospection: who shall judge of the heart?

It was now the middle of December, and fox-hunting was running a glorious career. Between Sir Thomas Mostyn and the Duke of Beaufort, hounds were always within reach; indeed, frequently more than one university man out of a hundred could make available; the spirit was sufficiently willing, but the horse-flesh was weak. For three months I had been going the pace that kills, my only regret being that it was ever necessary to pull bit, or get out of boots and breeches.

But the *surgit amari aliquid?* was an inquiry from which I had not been wholly exempt. My horses were at livery, my groom on board-wages, and though the establishment was small, it was expensive—in fact, awfully costly. After the lapse of the first month of residence, my little Irishman absolutely did nothing but bring up “small accounts,” memoranda of “trifling bills furnished,” and

refreshers about "kind promises to settle," &c. during such occasions as chanced to bring me within doors.

The old Cambridge joke, *æquam (equam) memento rebus in arduis* suggested itself to my philosophy ; differently rendered, however, from the translation popular among the Cantabs—I *did* think of my mare, but it was with the view of turning her into cash, when accident (a Welsh rabbit and gin-cocktail at the Mitre) introduced me to one Mr. J——, who had come up from the Principality to drive the Bristol mail, and take his degree as Master of Arts.

We used to sup at adjoining tables ; were wont to call for the same grills, malts, and brews—vinous and spirituous ; and to make it always a point never to call for the bill. It defied even English phlegm to resist such sympathy as this. The first advance brought us on smoking terms ; we then reached the point of sharing a bowl of punch, and, finally, became confidential.

The result of our mutual disclosures was,

that each was entrusted with a fact of which both were previously in possession, viz. that neither could *bonâ fide* command as much of the coin of the realm as would represent the capital expended upon manufacturing their respective cigars. Whether J—— was actually thinking upon this illustration of our exchequer, on the evening that we made clean breasts, I never learned; but no sooner was all snug in my rooms, whither we proceeded to form a committee of finance, than he thus broached his project:—

“There is no doing, my dear fellow,” he observed, at the same time constructing a stiff beaker of Hollands grog, and firing the extremity of an undeniable Woodville, “I say there is no doing (at least in this part of the kingdom) without some miscellaneous silver, if only to jingle in the tails of one’s coat—*vox et præterea nihil*—I haven’t a dump; what says the honourable member opposite?”

“That, in addition to the nothing which he possesses, he is some £300 sterling on the debtor side of certain ledgers; to the governor

it would be useless applying: I've overdone it in that quarter — to be sure, I have an uncle."

"Ah, God be praised!" interrupted the Welshman; "*that* is a relative vouchsafed to us all; but it's not fair to keep the double thong always going with a free worker; no, no, let your uncle alone this time, and we'll see what can be done. Old —, the tobacconist of Oxford Street, will melt a bit of stiff at three months — can you manage a ten-shilling stamp?"

A bill was duly concocted; J — took it to town by the following night's "Bristol;" negotiated it with the functionary alluded to, and each duly received the subjoined proceeds, as "value received" for his moiety of an acceptance for £800, payable at three months after date.

"Four boxes (a pound each) of Woodville's prime cigars, six pounds of fine snuffs, five dozen Moët's Champagne, twenty-two extra plated cheese-toasters (very superior articles), three gallons best walnut catsup (fine flavour,

warranted), and twenty Bank of England notes for £5 each."

The *Ides* of March at length arrived. It was the eve of a splendid day; one of those angel visits that the season permits, as a foretaste of spring; and I had returned to my rooms at the perfumer's, after a capital day with the Duke, in his hill country. My snug drawing-room looked the very ideal of comfort. In the centre stood a table, clothed in damask, the colour of Alpine snow, with plate and glass of fitting quality; while in the grate blazed a fire like a little gas manufactory. Saluting the fire, *à la mode Anglaise*, one boot off, the emancipated foot stuck into a yellow morocco slipper, with a bumper of Seltzer-water and curaoa in hand, stood "the intellectual lord of all."

In attendance, most correctly got up, as to boots, leathers, frock, neckcloth, and so forth, was Maher, scarce a yard and a quarter above the carpet he trode upon, but looking certificates that, as Spado says in the farce, "in soul he was forty feet high." According to

Lord Byron, a dog's nose is the seat of his mind : it is difficult to say whereabouts a servant's storehouse of perception is situate, but that he or she *does* mark, learn, and comprehend, with a faculty that seems to be a compound of reason and instinct, is past peradventure.

Now, my duodecimo domestic was possessed, by means of the above mysterious property, of a very considerable part, if not of the whole, of the commercial episode with which the reader has been entrusted. This I gathered from certain soliloquies that even his characteristic submission could not entirely smother. The cheese-toasters moved his especial bile : more than once I espied him holding one in his hand, as Hamlet does the skull of Yorick, muttering—

“ Ah ! thin is the master rally goin' to stand for a Welsh borough, that he has laid in such a stock of Taffey traps ? ”

Thus matters stood, and thus stood I, in act to escape from my second boot, when the hue of the Hibernian's face struck me of a heap.

“Jack,” said I, “what the d—l’s the matter with you?—is ‘Ferryman’ dying, or are you going to cut your *own* stick? Why, man, you are as pale as a ghost, and as nervous as St. Vitus.”

“Oh! nothin’ in life’s the mather, sir—nothin’ at all; let me finish dressing you, sir; and ate your dinner, sir—it’ll do ye good. WHO’S THERE?” he roared, as a low tap at the door made him jump off his feet; “there’s nobody at home; Mr Hyde is not come back from hunting; I don’t expect him to-night.”

“Mr. Maher,” said a tiny treble from out the throat of one of the younglings of the perfumer’s flock; “if you please, Mr. Maher, the two stout gentlemen that called this morning are in the hall; they say they saw Mr. Marston come in; oh! here they are, walking up stairs.”

“Tare and ounds!” shouted the little fellow, springing to the door, which he locked and bolted, “the Philistians is upon us; it’s true, for me, by Jas—I mane, that’s a fact—

arra! what sort of a time is this for a man to be picking his 'deed and 'deeds! Out of the bed-room windy, sir — (hadn't ye bether knock the doore down, and let yourselves in?) — on wid your grate coat, and dhrop quiteely into the garding. It's the ould tobacco-theef's bums is in it; sure, didn't I twig them the morning when they called? wasn't I born in Kildare, where the childer scent a fiery faces (*fieri facias*) as nathrally as a hound does a fox? Lep'd elegant! beautiful con-vaniances them cowcumber-beds for a gintleman to hop into when he's in a hurry. Now, over the wall, and we're in Love Lane; may be ye'd like an *entapis*, Mr. Bums, as Charley said to the Balruddery boys."

In less time than it has occupied to tell the adventure, Jack and I were scudding over the bridge, and, turning short to the right, presently cleared the first mile-stone on the London road.

At the door of a small public-house, at the foot of the hill, one of the Holyhead "up" coaches had halted to have its lamps lit. A

glass of brandy and water each, to coachman and guard, afforded us space to recover breath after our gallop, and imbibe similar restoratives ourselves. Then, mounting the leathern convenience, followed by my fidus Achates, yielding, in the spirit of a philosophy that became a gentleman commoner, to the pressure from without, I stuck one of the plaintiff's best Woodvilles in my cheek, and, by the blessing of six teams of cripples, and a prodigality of whipcord, beheld the dawn gild the chimney-pots of Kensington gravel-pits.

CHAPTER IV.

NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION.

Johnson's theory of goblins—Uncle Tom on death — A dissipated waiter—The *Ultimi Romanorum*—A resurrection in the nineteenth century—How to turn an honest penny—A new "subject" for surgery — How to breakfast in short breeches—"Poor Tom's a cold"—Tit for tat, that is to say, doing a tailor—*Mauvaise plaisanterie*—How to die a daily (paper) death.

"O think what anxious moments pass between
The birth of plans, and their last periods!"

ADDISON.

" Quocirca vivite fortes ;
Fortiaque adversis opponite pectora rebus."

HORAT. Sat. Lib. ii., Sat. 11.

CHAPTER IV.

Doctor Samuel Johnson, the severest of sages and doughtiest of modern philosophers, had as lively faith in the theory of ghosts and goblins as the most hysterical lady's maid ; one of England's thrice valorous commanders, an admiral with half the alphabet for a tail to his patronymic, would swoon outright if a kitten protruded the points of its whiskers into the same room with him ; and, according to Shakspeare, the music of a bagpipe has the effect upon some men that a cannon ball has on a water-spout at sea.

With such authorities staring him in the face, who shall deny that the wealthy Mr. Thomas Longueville, the "uncle Tom" of this

history, possessed sufficient right and title to indulge his proper fancies? In my first chapter I spoke of that worthy as possessing a fair round stomach, but, in other respects, as being of a spare habit. The phraseology of the stable helps me to an exact description of him ;—he was “a wiry-legged one, with a large middle-piece ;” but, by a dispensation of Fate, no doubt wisely ordained, man rarely, if ever, understands his idiosyncrasy aright. Lord —— thinks that the horns of a dilemma are best managed by such as wear antlers under their wigs ; Bishop —— holds that the fact of having jumped a theological Jim Crow entitles the performer to enact Jack Pudding in front of the woolsack ; and Colonel —— is aghast with astonishment when his logic fails to convince the popular legislative assembly that two and two make five.

In the affair of his *physique*, my uncle was similarly situated. The matter of stomach was a constant “*casus belli*” (may I be pardoned an unavoidable pun ?) between him and my father. With bowels of triple brass, and

a weasand like the cylinder of a high-pressure engine, he was conscientiously persuaded that his chyle was scarcely a match for a sweetbread, or his œsophagus for a lubrication stronger than lemonade.

My father, as I have said, was not a stoic; and it kept the nose of his patience on the grindstone to hear a stout gentleman uttering hourly lamentations for the annihilation of his digestion, and to see him consume provender by the pound avoirdupois. My father swore that Tom was booked for as long a pilgrimage as the wandering Jew; and Tom himself asserted, and believed it, that his place was already taken for the other world.

Twelve hours of a March night, spent upon the "slates" of a mail or post-coach, would bring before the imagination even of a Polar bear visions of Whitney blankets and pans of hot coals. Small space, therefore, it will be easily conceived, did the Oxford fugitives expend in procuring a passage to their refuge, having once doubled Cumberland Gate.

Has the courteous reader ever seen Long's

coffee-room at six a.m. on a winter's morning ? Should he never have had that luck, I conjure him to do so before he marries and settles in the country ; it will help him in the matter of the rural and domestic considerably. As I issued from the jarvey, there stood to receive me the same dissipated-looking little waiter, who, for several seasons of my life, never permitted me to enter my bed in Clifford Street without insinuating a bottle of iced punch into my stomach, or into my bill. I wonder if he's dead or alive, and, should he be deceased, whether he ever, by any chance, thinks of iced punch *now*.

“ There's a trifle of quiet smoke going on still, sir,” said he of the dissolute visage, with a bow ; “ perhaps you'd like to ‘ cloud ’ before you turn in ? ”

At the moment I would have gone any where in this world, or the other, where there was a fire ; so, despite a horrible grimace from Maher, I kicked open the door, and entered the coffee-room.

Around a grate full of dying embers sat a

group, comprising a select half-dozen of the *ultimi Romanorum*. In an arm-chair, with his legs over the back, vehemently dishevelled as to his carrots, sat S——, his waistcoat (that had once been white) besprinkled with wine and ashes, like a sacrificial altar.

Recumbent on a *chaise longue* was R——, the good-humoured, rosy-gilled R——, who looked (and still looks, meet him where you may — which is everywhere) as if all the broadcloth about him had grown upon each particular spot it covered.

A sofa, qualified for Greenwich, supported stalwart J—— (his head considerably below the horizontal); as fine a specimen of the Milesian, at the time, as you'd meet, from the Giant's Causeway to the Old Head of Kinsale. The other moiety of the group was strictly in keeping; but perhaps the sample already given may convey a fair idea of the lot.

It will be supposed that such a party, under present circumstances especially, were not likely to be fastidious, or easily moved; nevertheless, my *entrée* seemed to make a sensation.

Albeit, erratic as were the habits of the majority frequenting the Bond Street hostel where our scene is laid, it was not every day in the week such a phantom as then invaded it made "night hideous." The figure had not its "beaver up," because it was *minus* that accommodation ; but, in lieu thereof, its head and face were swathed in a shawl, the only feature visible being a nose, then a little reddish.

A shaggy great coat was speedily thrown aside ; and there stood I, confessed — in an orthodox pink ; white cords, most scientifically soiled ; a top-boot encasing one leg ; a blue worsted stocking and a yellow morocco slipper doing duty for a similar convenience on the other. Horace's *nil admirari* is a quality that never wholly deserts good society. Whatever might have been the actual feeling on the occasion, it was expressed carelessly, and in a good-humoured, gentlemanlike style. The first to speak was S——.

" Ah !" said he, removing his weed between his second and third fingers, " what debauched

habits men acquire at college!—here, at the hour for chapel, enters gentleman commoner Hyde Marston, from a masquerade.”

It's no joke,” said I; “the cold has almost done for me. Are there no coals in the house? cannot a drain of any thing warm be had?”

“I see it all,” interrupted R——, sitting upright, and ringing a peal upon the bell; “a raw morning, and the wind *does* blow keenly, from those Hampstead hills, upon the neighbourhood of Burton Crescent. You, James! waiter—fuel! quick! none of your Newcastle incombustibles, but something that will flare up incontinently: wood, I say—*lignum super foco*; and, d'ye hear, a member of the university of Oxford is athirst; use despatch, and bring in a tub of brandy.”

Well singest thou, Byron; pleasure is indeed a pleasant thing, and excellent, withal, as a moral alternative. Suppose a man were to weep himself to stone, would he be the better able to discharge an acceptance for £800, the amount of his cash balance being

under as many pence? Thus I mused, while occupied in constructing a tumbler of brandy-and-water; and, by the time my cigar was well alight, the inward man was placid and composed.

I looked at my booted leg, and at that which was slip-shod — then at the blazing wood fire, and the jolly companions around; and, having whispered an internal inquiry as to what the odds might be, so long as one was happy, surrendered myself to the stream of circumstance.

“Come, J——,” said one of the circle, considerably advanced in wine, taking off his wig and thrusting it into his coat pocket, while he proceeded to load the bowl of a meerschaum resembling a half-bushel; “come, J——, don’t let the arrival of this ingenuous youth deprive us of the advantage of your moral. Pray proceed with your story, which, if I remember me, left off in Bury Street, or Pickering Place.”

“In the former,” said J——, with his racy northern brogue, which gave an attic

relish to the narrative ; “and, as I was saying, Ireland was never in such luck since the repeal of the Union. S——, there, and I, won every *coup* we played, and before midnight the bank was ‘burst.’ Old —— announced the failure, with the smile that a hyæna puts on when the showman stirs him up with a long pole. ‘Down on my luck, gentlemen,’ said he ; ‘worse chance now, better next trial. There is no coin in the house ; but what’s the use of brains if a man can’t discount them ? Perhaps you wouldn’t mind helping an industrious fellow to turn an honest penny ; it won’t occupy you long. Jim, my door porter, when town’s empty, and times is bad, does a trifle in a line that, now there’s a pinch for cash, I don’t mind trying my own hand at. Here, Jim, run into the mews, and see if you can’t borrow a sack.’

“In five minutes Jim returned with the bag, in which the old pandemonium-keeper proceeded to deposit himself. ‘Now,’ he continued, ‘just tie the top with a bow-knot, and give me hold of one of the running ends. It’s

only across Piccadilly ; call a conveyance, and the job will be done while you're thinking about it.' Forthwith S—— and I, and the door-porter, stowed away our live lumber, and ordered the coach to set down at Sir ——'s, in Saville Row. As we turned out of Bond Street, a voice from the canvas exclaimed, 'Jim, you mustn't let me go no how under a pony — five-and-twenty pounds is the lowest farthing. Tell the doctor you never brought him such a subject before ; and, if you never deliver yourself of a worse lie than that, you'll do.'

“The people in Saville Row were quite *au fait* to their business. A cloak was handed out, in which the sack was enveloped ; hardly had the door closed upon the merchandize, when it opened again, let out Jim with the money in his hand, and almost as soon as ourselves, old ——'s body was again in Bury Street ; there never was such an illustration of the quick and the dead.”

In a sadly hackneyed hexameter, Virgil makes the Queen of Carthage, with an exem-

plary spirit, for a pagan, express herself to the effect that, having known grief, she had learnt how to feel for the distressed. On the morning that succeeded the foregoing symposium, I awoke to a contemplation that wrought a similar effect. Never, from that hour, do I hear of a gentleman being compelled to keep his bed while his shirt is washed, without sympathising with him as a brother. It was long past noon ; and in the centre of the room, upon which the sun shone strongly, stood Maher, with an expression of face compounded of a grin and a cry—

“ You didn’t want me to brush your clothes, or your hat, sir,” said the little villain ; “ so I waited till your bell rang. Shall I bring you some breakfast?—you can’t so well go down in ——”

“ Go to the d—l !” said I. “ Fetch me half-a-dozen broiled kidneys, and a tankard of stout ; I shall be better able to work after I’m fed.”

Son of man ! whence cometh it that thou dost suffer thy spirit to droop, and thy heart

to sink even unto the pit of thy stomach? “In nature there is nothing melancholy;” why, then, should *thy* soul be sad? Scarce is the bright vault of Heaven hidden by the shadows of night, than the east again smiles in her promise of glory and gladness; while yet the black suit of winter clothes hill and valley, the snowdrop and primrose are seen decorating its dreary costume. Mortal man! arise, and be of good cheer. Heaven hath its sunlight; earth hath her flowers; and thou hast philosophy—and thy breakfast. Having, in this mood, done justice to the kidneys and porter, I found under my ribs “a heart for any fate.”

“And now, Maher,” I continued, “as it is neither pleasant nor reputable to lie abed beyond sunset, betake thyself to Beaumeister, and tell him I must have a suit of mourning by dinner hour; swear I can’t leave the house without it, and you’ll not perjure yourself. Jupp and O’Shaughnessy are good in the items of hats and boots. See that thy master and self are equipp’d with all things fitting. Bring

a newspaper ; go forth and replenish the wardrobe."

There is one peculiarity in the character of tailors that I do not remember to have seen noticed by any of the writers who have turned their attention to those fractions of the human species. All men, more or less in the degree, are obnoxious to imposition, and liable to fall into the snares of the crafty and designing. Now your tailor, "like the scorpion girt with fire," if nobody comes forward to do for him, is driven by his instinct to volunteer the act for himself. Some such reflections as these were dividing my musing with the fashionable *on-dits* of the "Morning Post," when I was attracted by a conversation carried on in a suppressed tone, in my sitting-room, which was only divided from the head of my bed by a wainscot partition.

"Indeed you can't see my master, Mr. Beaumeister; he's in bed, and in great grief: what'll I tell him about the mourning?"

"It's in hand, and you may rely on it in time to dress for dinner. But this death, Mr.

Maher ; it's an awful thing, death ; very sudden, I suppose ? — run away from Oxford, I perceive, at a moment's warning — hope old Mr. Marston——”

“ Oh ! — it's not him at all at all — only a relation of Mr. Hyde, that was drinking the waters at Cheltenham, and went off like the snuff of a candle ; the Lord preserve us ! ”

“ I see — his uncle — read his arrival the other day at the Plough ! How unexpected ! Mr. Longueville looked so hearty and well : there *is* no trusting to appea——”

“ True for you ; but——”

“ Ay, ay, he *was* of an apoplectic habit : well, it can't be cured ; so, as the poet says, it must be endured : lots of money there, Mr. Maher ; your master comes in for all ? ”

“ You may say that.”

“ All coin, in the funds ? ”

“ Every tinpenny piece in the five-percents.”

“ Now, perhaps, you were obliged to come away without a supply of present cash ; I'm almost ashamed to offer——”

“ Oh ! don't apologize.”

“ But if I might furnish a small supply, and take the trouble off Mr. Marston's hands——”

“ You're heartily welcome, Mr. Beaumeister; I'm sure my master won't be disobliged the laste in life : there's one or two things necessary on these occasions, which ——”

“ All shall be attended to : leave it to *me* ; I'm used to these affairs.”

Were I put to the torture, to force me to confess why I thus permitted my uncle to be despatched without an effort to save him, I could not give a reason. It might have been that the extravagant impudence of the Irishman overcame me, or that the rank verdure of the cockney was too exquisitely luxurious to be foregone.

Whatever was the cause, in effect there I lay, till Maher, about six, entered, with my “ inky suit,” and a polite note, enclosing the supplies. As the mischief was done, I saw nothing for it but to let the affair remain as it was till morning, when I resolved to set the tailor right ; arrange with him the amount of

his advance; and put the best face in my power upon a piece of *mauvaise plaisanterie*. In this mood I dressed, descended to the coffee-room, and soon forgot everything, but that the wine and the company were of choice flavour.

It was the evening of the following day, and Mr. Thomas Longueville sat before a blazing hearth, in one of the drawing-rooms of the Plough. Coffee had just been placed before him, and the morning paper was drying on the fender. The wind moaned without, and the rain fell heavily.

“It’s a monstrous melancholy night,” said uncle Tom, giving the fire a rousing; “enough to infect any man with the horrors; and, to say the truth, I’m not in the very best spirits. I feel, as the saying is, as if some one was walking over my grave. Well, here’s the paper; let me see if I can’t find something in it to amuse and cheer me.”

Uncle Tom folded the journal scientifically, wiped his spectacles, placed them carefully across his nose, and, holding his broad sheet

so that the full glare of the pair of wax lights fell upon it, read as follows—

“ Died, on Monday last, at the Plough Hotel, Cheltenham, whither he had gone for the benefit of the waters, to the deep regret of a large circle of friends, Thomas Longueville, Esq., of Harley Street, in the sixty-third year of his age. His great wealth goes to his nephew, Hyde Marston, Esq., at present a member of the University of Oxford.”

CHAPTER V.

RANDOM REMINISCENCES.

A friend in need a friend indeed — Recollections of college life — True believers, tailors—Moulsey Hurst—" The scratch"—The chivalry of pugilism—The ring—The key—How to borrow a buggy—The Bedford in by-gone days—Spirit of a sire (not a word about sainted).

“ Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire, cut in alabaster ?
Sleep when he wakes, and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish ?”

Merchant of Venice.

“ O, 'tis the coldest youth upon a charge,
The most deliberate fighter.”

DRYDEN.

“ Enquire at London, 'mong the taverns there ;
For there, they say, he daily doth frequent
With unrestrained, loose companions.”

SHAKSPEARE.

CHAPTER V.

I have said that I descended to the coffee-room when my toilette was completed, and soon forgot every thing, except that the wine and company were of choice flavour. Let it not be supposed, however, that I had screwed my philosophy up to a belief that nothing more was necessary to enable a member of the university to absent himself from his college than the act of mounting a Holyhead night-coach, at the foot of Heddington Hill. Despite the excellence of the *cuisine*, the claret, and the circle, at moments grim memories of provosts and proctors would intrude, with a vision of expulsion in the distance, more awful than the sword of Damocles.

The evening passed, and the morning's post brought a letter from T—. He had learned the secret of my flight, within an hour or two of its occurrence; and, having taken the immediate precaution of putting my name on the sick list, and causing the scout to draw my commons regularly, there was a fair chance that breathing-time would be allowed, to look about and reorganize the scattered elements of my fortunes.

As softening as the effect of distance upon the physical world, in which hills are said to "look green afar off," is the influence of time upon the moral of our lives. This was my earliest scrape; and it is with a feeling somewhat akin to pleasure that I look back upon it now. It may be that I but half recall the perplexity and anxiety that environed me when within its meshes; but how vivid, to one worn and wasted with his pilgrimage, is the remembrance of the buoyancy of spirit, the assurance of trust with which he encountered the labours and difficulties of his way, ere he was taught the lesson that hope can beguile as well as promise!

Young as I was, of course I knew well enough that the attempt to arrest "an infant" was merely a dashing *ruse*, on the part of the Oxford Street usurer. Had the capture been effected, he calculated that sooner than go to the proof of non-age, his debtor would have come down handsomely for a compromise: this his experience, no doubt, enabled him to reckon upon. As it was, however, I put on a bold face, bearded the Cerberus in his kennel, and, by the aid of my father's law familiar, the affair was soon adjusted.

With the tailor, of course, I had no trouble: "*suffering* is the badge of all his tribe:" an assurance of settlement at an early day was probably more than he expected. Let none to whom a promise to pay is not confirmation strong, and satisfaction ample, dare to draw scissors, or assume thimble, within the city or liberties of Westminster. Tailors are the true children of the Land of *Promise*: their *faith* is only limited by the calls that are made on it.

The week spent upon this occasion at Long's

was not without adventure. Having arranged the business which brought me to town, and, moreover, being in a healthy condition of exchequer, I forthwith bestirred myself, as became a youth of enterprise, to take my pleasure.

The ring was at this time in considerable fashion, and, as I had never seen a prize-fight, it was settled, between the late Lord M—— and myself, to make our *début* at an affair of the kind to be celebrated on Moulsey Hurst. This was accomplished by means of four posters from Bob Newman's, of Swallow Street. The combatants were Philip Sampson, whom I afterwards saw fight big Brown, of Bridgenorth, and, I think, a man of the name of Hall. As a great deal has been written about pugilism, both by friends and foes, its first impression upon one whose taste has ever led him to regard with enthusiasm the manly pastimes of his countrymen may not be without interest.

A more animating sight, one that more completely appeals to the core of manhood,

than that of two human beings, in the prime of life and vigour, engaged in the display of extraordinary physical properties, aided by the most accomplished skill, and supported by indomitable courage, there cannot be witnessed. Such, where the parties opposed to each other are of known character and standing in their hardy profession, is a prize-fight, *at its commencement*. When, having shaken hands, these throw themselves into attitude for the set-to; their eyes bright as “load-stars;” every thew and sinew braced for the strife; each, in frame and station, the ideal of grace, power, and determination;—those hearts must, indeed, be moulded of vile dust, which feel not, nor enter into the inspiration of the contest. To such I belong not; neither covet I “their tenements of clay.” . . .

There are few more rural spots than the site of Hampton race-course, the famed Moulsey Hurst. On the day of which I am speaking, the sun shone brightly upon its soft, green carpet; the silver Thames went sparkling by, and a much more gentle company than in the

present day a similar occasion would draw together was grouped around the scene of battle. The arena within the ropes was cleared ; the usual preliminaries were gone through ; and the seconds and bottle-holders retired, leaving the principals face to face, their guards up, in the centre of the ring.

My breath stopped, and my heart beat audibly ; the throbs sounded to my ears as distinctly as ever did the chimes of the Horse Guards' clock. It was a moment of intense excitement, such as I had never known before. The men eyed each other for a space, with glances that the famished tiger flashes upon its prey. A few feints were at first exchanged ; at length a palpable blow was given ; another, and another, followed ; then they fell thick as summer hail, and the fighters were locked in the wild struggle for the fall.

Thus it was for the first half-dozen rounds ; an encounter in which men might engage, and a spectacle on which men might look. But its character altered rapidly with its progress. The blood of backers and seconds was up ;

the worst passions of their natures were roused, and all possible influences were strained to intimidate, harass, and distract. Each party in turn reviled, insulted, and loaded with every conceivable indignity the champion of the other. Every thing that loathsome language could construct out of words was lavished to draw aside the attention, or palsy the courage of the belligerents.

As soon as some positive execution had been done, the gibes, scoffings, and efforts to intimidate and dishearten, opened on both sides.

“ Poor fellow ! ” exclaimed the seconds, bottle-holders, and friends of one party, addressing the opposite champion ; “ have you nobody to care for you, and take you away, while there’s a trifle of life left ? ”

“ Why, he’s dead, and does n’t know it ! ”

“ Where’s the coroner ? ”

“ Fetch a shutter ! ”

“ Dog’s meat ! ”

“ Is there ever a doctor wants a subject ? ”

&c. ; while the other side were roaring—

“ Phil ! give it him easy, or he’s a stiff un.”

“ Oh ! crikey, is it his nose that’s a sticking out at the back of his head ?”

“ Handle the sponge tenderly, or you’ll wipe out his *other* eye.”

“ Well, if he *will* fight, it’s only manslaughter, let the beak do his worst.”

“ Another little un in the larder.”

“ Down he goes.”

“ He can’t get up.”

“ Where’s the use ; if he could, he can’t see.”

“ He’ll never see again.”

“ He’ll never stand again !”

“ Carry him out.”

“ Bury him decently ;” and such like animating allusions.

For a mortal hour, or more, amid a roar of abomination to which Billingsgate would have been Ciceronian elegance, the fight was prolonged ; and Sampson was, I believe, declared the victor.¹ I may be mistaken in the identity

¹ I rather think the fight here alluded to was that between Ned Neal and Jim Burn, which I also saw, and the dates were nearly alike.

of this battle, but the characteristics attributed to it apply to all similar exhibitions; and what were the first feelings they excited? That the principle of inculcating a spirit of fair play, which alone could sanction the practice of pugilism, so far from being promoted by the system, was, in a prize-fight, directly outraged and turned to scorn.¹

I am not going to perpetrate maudlin sentiment about the barbarity of the fair combat between man and man. All animals are endowed, more or less, with a warlike instinct; and men, from the highest to the lowest, have acted upon it from the beginning, and will do so to the end. But I cannot permit such a libel to pass, as that, to the ribald ruffianism of the prize-ring, we are indebted for the manly nature of our national courage. It is alike an insult to the reason and the character of Englishmen to presume upon such a

¹ It is true that foul blows were repudiated; but every thing else foul that the heart of man can conceive was not alone permitted, but evidently esteemed the great points of the spectacle.

need or such a result. British manliness requires not to be, neither is it, upheld—

“ —— tali auxilio; nec defensoribus istis.”

As M—— and I were dining together, after our return, a note was handed to me, from J——, announcing that he had fallen into captivity, having been that forenoon “picked out of his feathers” (taken in his bed), in consequence of the “ignorant impatience” of his cordwainer. Panegyrist of “the good old times”—*laudator temporis acti*—how deem ye of these degenerate days, wherein the law is no longer the instrument of the “bold bad man;” neither at his caprice may he consign his fellow-creature to a dungeon? Behold! sorrow hath come upon the hairy of Houndsditch; and the circumcised of thy Circus, O Finsbury, are sad of soul!—because no more is it permitted them to spread their nets privily, neither to take into bondage the earthly tabernacles of the unwary.

But the days of tribulation were not yet over, and our Irish friend (it must be admit-

ted under circumstances of strong suspicion) was fast in the gripe of the Philistines, in a court contiguous to Carey Street. Thither we hastened; and there, in a parlour, the size of a sentry-box, discovered J——, duly accounted for, on a suit of trespass in the matter of much top-boots, dancing-pumps, and such like leathern vanities. To our inquiries as to what could be then and there done for him, we were informed that it was “after office hours,” and, consequently, nothing could be effected till morning. Seeing, therefore, that the defendant could not come to us, we resolved to abide with him, at least till we were turned out; and having devised a tolerably comfortable tipple, all things considered, set about disposing of the night rather artistically.

Notwithstanding that the apartment was small, the fire large enough for Westminster Hall, the toddy boiling, the tobacco-reek as thick as pea-soup, and the thermometer about twice as high as its ordinary elevation at the line, the host and his accomplished daughter

insisted upon favouring us with their society and assistance in promoting the flow of soul—and its accompaniments.

Upon a piece of barbarous furniture, that served in capacity of sofa and turn-down bedstead, the female Israelite and I were seated in awful proximity. One don't desire to be thought deficient in gallantry, but at any hazard I must avow I rarely in my life was situated much less to my taste. With a woman, as it were, forced back into her primitive "fix,"—that is to say, taking her place again among your ribs,—it is impossible to divest yourself of all consciousness of her whereabouts.

Never did I catch a glimpse of the semicircular visage stuck to the lapel of my coat, like the order of the crescent, without fancying there was a vulture in petticoats perched at my elbow. To add to her natural attractions, the damsel wielded a huge key in her hand with such instinctive adroitness, that it seemed like a supernumerary limb ; there was an ominous polish upon it that spoke elo-

quently of safe custody in more respects than one.

“Your key is fortunate,” said I; “is it always so happy as to recline in that fair palm?”

“Hasn’t been out of it these fourteen years,” replied the Israelitish maid.

“You don’t mean to say you sleep with it in your hand?”

“I mean to say I couldn’t sleep if it was out of my hand; I left it with father one night, and never got a blessed wink.”

“When you catch your game you make pretty sure of it, then; did you ever lose a head by any chance?”

“Yes, we had an escape about six years ago, and father was fixed for a large sum. A young Frenchman was here, against whom there were detainers for upwards of £4,000. He was with us about a week, when one evening he sent for me to make his coffee; I left him in this room at nine o’clock, and never saw him again. A few days after, we received a letter from him dated Paris, stating the

manner in which he effected his enlargement. While I was occupied with his coffee, he sat close to the table opposite to me ; beneath it, upon his knee, he held a card, on which he traced the various wards of this key, together with its precise dimensions, and remained up all night making a counterpart in strong wire from his plan. In the morning, when the centre door, to which it belongs, was the only one locked, watching an opportunity, he let himself out, and took his leave.”

“ An undeniable illustration of French leave,” said I ; but either the allusion did not take, or was not relished.

Before noon on the following day, “ the cruel cobbler ” was induced to arrange, and once more J—— joined the set that usually breakfasted together at Long’s. As we sat discussing our meal, and matters and things in general, I heard my name pronounced in a most emphatic treble. The door opened, and John Mytton, of Halston, with whom I had but recently become acquainted, was announced. He wore a drab great-coat, very

long in the skirts, over a hunting-dress. "I want you, Marston," said he, "to dine with me to-night at the Bedford. I'm going to look at Lord Derby's stag-hounds, and ordered my carriage to follow me here. It's half-past eleven" (a fact he learned from a timepiece in the room, for he never wore a watch); "those infernal fellows have fallen asleep in their saddles. What's to be done? By Jove! how fortunate, here's a buggy at the door; it's just the thing."

"Holloa!" I shouted, as he strode away, "that gig belongs to a doctor, who...."

"So much the better," replied my new acquaintance, holding the door ajar; "being a medical man, he knows the importance of punctuality."

In a moment he jumped into the vacant seat, seized whip and rein from the astounded groom, gave the M.D.'s steed an awful smack over the ears, and, as the polite novels say, "was out of sight in an instant."

In the days I am writing of, they used to serve you a haunch, and put a bottle of port

wine on the table at the Bedford, better than at any house of the kind in London. Clubs had not then effected the ruin of taverns; neither was it considered undignified to feed at such places. It was drawing towards twelve; and Mytton and I, having done justice (perhaps something more) to its good cheer, were in brilliant spirits. He was relating one of his best stories, and the walls rang with our laughter, when, looking towards the door, my eye fell upon two figures advancing in a suspicious way up the centre of the long coffee-room.

There was no gas then; but, through the dim obscure, I knew the intruders as well as if a Bude light was carried before them. The foremost of the pair walked quickly onwards, while behind crawled Maher, looking as if he was going to the gallows. His leader, who was muffled as from a journey, paused on reaching my chair. For a moment he gazed steadfastly at me, and, laying his hand violently on my shoulder, exclaimed—

“Is it possible! have I found you here!”

“You unceremonious old buffer!” shouted my companion; “paws off, or I’ll try which is stoutest, your head or the decanter.”

“Mytton,” said I, scarce able to bring the words out, “for God’s sake, hold!—it is my father!”

“And,” continued the first speaker, “in the midnight tavern-brawler, while yet the corpse of a doating uncle is unburied—in the fugitive from his college—in the debaucher of his friend’s child—that father finds a son! It is horrible—most horrible!”

CHAPTER VI.

ARRIVALS AND REVIVALS.

A stroke of the filial and paternal — *Ecce iterum*, the dissipated waiter — A case of prejudice — “Gaping, wide mouth, waddling frog” — A “slovenly, unhandsome corse” — A calm after a storm — Another dead waiter — Interchanges of courtesy and such like — “Yes, memory has honey cells” — Things retrospective — A jolly breakfast in the family-way — The way of the world — The philosophy of a rout — A nice young man.

“ Moschus! with whom once more I hope to sit,
And smile at folly—if we can’t at wit;
Yes, friend! for thee I’ll quit my cynic cell,
And bear Swift’s motto—‘Vive la bagatelle.’ ”

BYRON’S *Hints from Horace.*

“ He never went to bed ’till two in the morning, and was every now and then hunted down by a constable, to signalize his vivacity.

Spectator.

CHAPTER VI.

There are few less likely means of insuring a patient audience than opening the negociation for it with a request that the party about to be addressed will "hear reason." It may be assumed as a foregone conclusion that he or she will do nothing of the kind, and is the commencement of that which purports to be a peaceful treaty by an aggression. But my experience of human nature, upon the occasion of the dinner at the Bedford, with which the last chapter closed, had not yet put forth its earliest blossoms ; and, consequently, in an affair that required delicate management, my attempt was a signal failure.

Having handed my sire a chair, with dutiful look and tone requesting he would be seated,

and allow me to order him some refreshment, I began by begging he would "listen to my explanation calmly, and without prejudice." This was the first blow, for I saw a blush dawning around his temples, a sure sign a storm was brewing.

Mytton, who was rather more sober than was his habit at midnight, discovered how the land lay as soon as I announced our visiter, and, with his usual downright manner, went at once into the pith of the business. Filling and handing over to the new comer a bumper of port, and draining one himself, he gave utterance to his sentiments in a voice that denoted there was nothing amiss with his lungs.

"Come, sir, don't put yourself into a passion about nothing; the whole is a mistake, I assure you. The report of the death, and all that sort of thing, was a hoax: make your mind easy, the old gentleman at Cheltenham is not at all dead."

This produced the climax: for a moment, an expression full of strong emotion passed

over my father's countenance; a tear fell, evidently despite a strong effort to restrain it, and, abruptly addressing Mytton, he rejoined—

“Passion, sir! what d’ye mean by a passion, sir!—I was never less ruffled in my life, though I didn’t think it possible I could even hear of such a piece of unexampled villainy without being moved” (he trembled from head to foot). “And so it’s a hoax, is it? I suppose I’m indebted to you, sir, for the plot, and to you,” (it was my turn now) “you unnatural reprobate, for enacting the chief character. One gentleman promulgates a scurvy jack-pudding joke, and the other dresses himself in full costume to support it. Capital fun, isn’t it, to masquerade for an uncle’s death! rare sport! none better, except putting on real mourning for a father. I wish ye both a particularly good night. I beg to congratulate two young gentlemen, so diligently going to the devil, upon their near approach to the end of their journey.”

At the beginning of this oration Maher had

sneaked off, and at its conclusion my progenitor strode out of the room. I confess the aspect of affairs was any thing but agreeable to me ; nor did Mytton seem to regard the prospect as a promising one.

“ Old fellow,” said he, “ I think you had better look sharp after the author of your being, or he’s likely to do himself a mischief. I don’t remember ever having seen a respectable elderly person in such a fury before : go after him, and, if you find him bound towards the river, hang on by the tails of his coat.”

As I passed across Covent Garden, a figure hastily retreating down King Street revealed to me the object of my anxiety. I kept him in sight, and, having housed him at Long’s, followed as soon as I thought time enough had been allowed to ensure his being clear of the hall. At the door of the office (that stood, and still stands, on the right hand of the Bond Street entrance) John Long met me, and, having telegraphed that the coast was safe, I made the best of my way up, six stairs at a stride, to my bedroom.

Mention has been made, in a former chapter, of a certain dissipated-looking waiter, whose peculiar province it was to enact the courteous to such guests as presented themselves when the little hours had set in. This individual was one of those officials known at hotels as "the night-gang," a class which, in London, probably enjoys two hours of sleep in each week, from May to August inclusive.

Now, among the peculiarities of my seed and generation, one, and that by no means the least emphatic, has been heretofore left unnoticed. When I spoke of Dr. Johnson's crotchets as excuses for the eccentricities of Uncle Tom, I might also have pleaded their privilege in favour of a nearer relative ; for it must be declared that my father was by no means without his weaknesses. Foremost among the items that effectually capsized his philosophy, was the sight of a fellow-creature under the influence of that nervous affection called "gaping."

This being the case, and the recently-described scene at the Bedford had in account,

it was not one of the most likely events in the world to lead to a pleasing catastrophe, that a night-waiter, who had probably not been drawn through the sheets for the previous six weeks, should have waylaid him on the second-floor landing. But such was the fact: and, as I happened to be a spectator of the result, it is my duty, as an honest historian, faithfully to narrate it.

The attendant, as aforesaid, hearing some one ascending to his chamber, had armed himself with a light, and the usual provocation to iced punch. This light was a stalwart mould of four to the pound, then first ignited, and stuck into a flat candlestick. The inquiry as to "the gentleman's number" being replied to, the fellow, holding the room door open with one hand, and in the other the newly-mounted mutton, was in the act of putting his accustomed interrogatory, and had got as far as "a charming bottle of punch in" when, as poets say, Nature insisted upon her prerogative.

In plain English, he opened his jaws like

the Bull and Mouth, and exploded with an unnatural yawn — such as might be expected from one who had supped upon an opium factory. Thus, for an instant, the pair stood confronting each other, but for an instant only. While yet the mouth was stretched from ear to ear, my father yelled out—

“ Ah! ah! what d’ye mean by that, ye scoundrel! — what d’ye mean by *that*! — d—me, are ye going to swallow me?”—and I saw the flaming candle thrust, blazing as it was, into the wretch’s throat, till the flat bottom of the instrument that held it actually struck against his nose and chin.

A terrible uproar ensued, during which the party who had perpetrated the outrage quietly locked his door, and shut out the din. All the rabble of the house, the loose fish of the coffee-room, and the tag-rag and bobtail of the kitchens, rushed to the scene of action, and seemed to give me credit for having put the dissipated night-waiter to death. Some lifted him on his legs; some asked “ what was

the row?" and others, "what was to be done with the body?"

Between the wine and excitement of the Bedford, and the bedevilment raging around me, I was losing my patience fast, and began to feel as savage as a tiger.

"What's to be done with the corpse?" whined out a "boots," upon whom gin and four-and-twenty hours' work in the day had left their marks — "what *is* to be done with this here dead chap?"

"Chalk him down to my account," said I, lending the querist a refresher upon the part where such reminiscences are found to be most effective, and making good my retreat — "charge him to my bill; and, if he leaves a wife and children behind, *charge him twice.*"

A calm proverbially succeeds a storm: thus the morning that followed this turbulent night brought with it reflection, not unmingled with that manly self-reproach which is the best moral specific. It was clear that something beyond the common had occurred; for, fruitful as my father's character was in oddities,

they rarely drove him to the extravagant violence of which he had so recently been guilty. In short, I began to feel very uncomfortable; a broken, feverish sleep had not improved my nerves; and it was a real relief when Maher made his appearance with the ordinary morning items, viz., hot water to comfort the outer, and soda-water the inner, man.

A glance at his face—inflexible as were the materials that composed it—served to convince me that all was not well. As he drew back the curtains of my windows, he began—

“The old gentleman, sir, has been awake since daylight, ringing his bell as if the house was a-fire, and blowing up most uncommon. Ralph, the second ‘boots,’ told me he nearly killed *another* waiter this morning wid a crack of a pot full of biling coffee: it’s as much as the price of any man’s life to open his doore.”

“Go instantly,” said I, “with my dutiful respects, and say I shall be with him as soon as I’m dressed.”

There was no declining the embassy; so

the Irishman went his way, but with little of his customary alacrity. His feet seemed glued to the floor; and it was not till he perceived that preparations were in an advanced state for discharging a soda-water bottle at his head that he set about his errand in earnest. In a particularly short time he returned, and thus announced the result:—

“Your father’s honour, sir, bade me say he is saved the trouble of desiring your honour’s honour to go to the devil—the Lord save us!—as you’re more than three parts of the way there already: he was sorry that, being in bed, he was prevented bestowing a handsome kicking on myself; but he was consoled by the reflection that he should be able to pay it with interest as soon as he had put on his boots.”

This, certainly, was no promising beginning; but, like virtue, perseverance is its own reward. A message, sent through a pretty, black-eyed, Welsh chambermaid, accompanied by a moiety of a *pâté de Perigord*, mollified him considerably; and, finally, I was sent for to take my morning’s meal with him, “if,

indeed, I *could* perpetrate a breakfast before evening."

Years of sorrow and of suffering have passed over the heart on which thy latest breath was drawn, thou good, and kind, and honourable old man! The blights of life have fallen upon it: the wintry winds of fortune have turned to ice the stream that burst so free and sparkling from its fountain; but the hour has never been, never *can* be, when the memory of one it loved so long and so well shall not bring peace and solace to that heart, worn and broken as it is.

The sun—for a London sun in April—was bestowing a very respectable ray upon the chamber as I entered. The tenant, in a night-cap secured to the temples by a scarlet *bandedeau*, sat bolt upright in bed, with his pigtail levelled over the left shoulder, in a most warlike attitude: the traces of a storm were still visible on his hale and ruddy features; but the savory pie was acting like oil upon the waves, and fair weather had already set in. Cordiality came with the progress of our in-

terview, and the explanations that arose out of it: these I will condense, for the convenience of giving them in form of a narrative.

The paragraph stating the death of Mr. Thomas Longueville had caused a considerable sensation at the Hall. My mother, who was as much attached to her brother as she was capable of being to anybody, exhibited strong concern; while my father busied himself with conjectures upon the means that had brought about an end which he so little anticipated. In this state things were during the morning and noon of the day that had brought the news. In the course of the evening a visiter arrived, and upon sending in his name, and stating that his business was urgent and of importance, he was admitted.

It was Major G——, who, with bursts of passion and despair, announced that his eldest daughter, Caroline, had eloped on the previous night, and that there was strong reason for believing she had been carried off by me! A pleasant party the three must have been, thus brought together, all circumstances considered.

My mother, perfectly convinced that I was the aggressor, left home early on the succeeding morning, and had been in Bath and hysterics ever since. Her better half set out for Oxford, in search of his hopeful heir; how he found him has been told in the preceding chapter.

What a jovial breakfast we had ! such digging for truffles ; such embowelling of the Perigord ; and then the Alloa ale, to keep the pie right ; and the *eau-de-vie de Dantzic*, to settle the malt. Who, that might have accidentally seen us at that hour, could, by any process of ratiocination, have arrived at the true state of the case ?

Beneath the surface of this merriment there lurked, in the breast of one of the actors, an anxiety that his best efforts scarcely enabled him to conceal. Absence had effaced none of the traces of my earliest passion. When the excitement and novelty of the scenes upon which I was thrown had left a moment for generous thought, in spirit I was again an inmate of the cottage of the Severn, lingering

on the smiles, and spell-bound by the music that fell from the gentle Charlotte's lips. Her devoted attachment to her sister was too endearing a trait to have escaped my observation ; and the conviction of it brought before me, with every aggravation, the double agony with which that sister's fatal step must have overwhelmed her.

Thus I pondered, compelled to assume cheerfulness, and accompany my father, during the remainder of the day, to the various places he desired to visit. As we strolled through the park, a salutation was bestowed upon us from an ancient chariot. It drew up, and old Lady L——, the widow of a Shropshire baronet, condescended to do the amiable upon a grand scale, finishing with a token of her consideration, in shape of a card for a rout, that night, at the house of “ a particular friend.”

This was Mrs. P——, the daughter of one of the wealthiest drysalters on Fish Street Hill, who had married the son of a deceased livery-stable keeper, also worth a round sum.

They had hired a splendid mansion in Portland Place, and some damaged ladies of quality, who acted as an Amazonian press-gang, when their employers thought fit to emblazon with a list of their guests the columns of the "Morning Post." I pocketed the pasteboard, and, the social hour having arrived, father and son dined together in cordial fellowship, and wound up the evening at Drury Lane, where Kean, then in the ripeness of his genius, played Richard.

The distinction between day and night is the last item taken into the account of hotel life, by the pleasure-seekers of a metropolis. At Long's, no one ever thought of going to bed, or of getting out of it: both were matters of compulsion. It was an hour after midnight: my father had retired; and half a dozen of us were about to settle ourselves for the rest of the day, when I recollected my morning's engagement. We wanted supper, and it held out every prospect of a good one; so, inviting my companions to honour me with their company in Portland Place, we departed thither accordingly.

The convenience of a *parvenue's* party was manifest at a glance. There was ten times as much meat and drink as there were guests ; and, consequently, every appliance of physical gratification, with plenty of room to enjoy it. Without an attempt to ascend to the drawing-rooms, or investigate the hostess or host, we made the best of our way to the *salle à manger* ; and, having discovered an unoccupied corner at a capitally-furnished table, proceeded to make ourselves comfortable.

We ate and drank like French falconers, and still demanded more liquor. The footmen at length grew slack : our supplies were exhausted ; things began to look serious, when S——, always on the *qui vive*, cried,

“ It’s all right, I’ve caught the butler ;” and straightway he was in communication with a portly personage in black.

“ He’s a trump,” said S——, returning ; “ gone for lots of champagne, and here he comes with it !”

“ Place those bottles on the table,” said a voice that made me start, to the servant who followed him. “ And now, though not exactly

in the service of the host, gentlemen, I'm *your* very obedient servant, and propose helping you *with*, as well as *to*, your wine."

A burst of laughter welcomed the speaker to his chair; he seated himself; and at the instant his eye caught mine riveted upon him, the stout eccentric was on his legs again like a harlequin. "Villain," said he, looking towards me with fury, "how dare you pollute society with your presence? Be-gone! and know that I have frustrated your projects: I have circumvented your plans; *your mistress is now under my protection!*"

Everybody stared aghast; while R——, measuring the speaker through his *lorgnettes*, exclaimed, "What an exceedingly debauched old man! I protest I never in my existence heard so disgusting an avowal."

Could it be possible? Was it not a dream? Did I really hear such words from the lips of uncle Tom?

CHAPTER VII.

LOVE, A PLAY.

“*Experientia docet*”—trite but true—A bit of the novelistic; Caroline G——’s affair—A literary lady: a *blue* bottle—How to live at *free* quarters—Ways and means—A passage of the real passion—Elopements translated into the vulgar tongue—Love and license—When Passion comes in, Principle flies out of the window.

“ Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert; whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes;
Flowers, whose rank odours breathe but agonies,
And trees whose gums are poison: such the plants,
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants
For some celestial fruits forbidden to our wants.”

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, canto iv. st. 120.

“ Oh love! what is it in this world of ours
That makes it fatal to be loved; ah, why
With cypress branches hast thou twined thy bowers,
And made thy best interpreter a sigh?”

BYRON.

CHAPTER VII.

The philosophy which teaches men to be content with things as they find them is more remarkable for good humour and *bonhomie* than the soundness or expediency of its doctrine. It is true that, could we look upon society at fifteen in the spirit wherewith we regard it at five-and-thirty, life would lose much of its poetry; but it would gain more than an equivalent in the store of practical good which is the harvest of experience.

From the world only is a true and effective knowledge of the world to be gathered. The theories of books, and household counsellors, may help us to the rudiments of a system suited to the ordinary necessities of civiliza-

tion ; but for its subtleties and manœuvrings human ingenuity has never devised a code of conduct, nor ever will.

The majority of works written avowedly for the purposes of worldly instruction supply specifics for desperate cases, but leave the less intrusive to be ministered to by the patient himself. There lies the great mistake. For one wreck caused by rocks that stand above the ocean, a hundred stately vessels are lost on shoals that lurk beneath its surface. We shun the bold bad man ; even the bankrupt in principle does this ; for it is the homage that instinct pays to virtue : but in that antipathy is there moral strength or security ? Far otherwise. A careful analysis of the natural abhorrence of avowed vice supplies the true bait of your fishers of men. These, adopting Sheridan's description of courage, employ materials as polished as they are keen.

Fatal, indeed, is the error that limits to the proclaimed haunts of extravagance and profligacy the ruin of the weak and unwary. Were the victims of the common hells of St.

James's compared with the broken in fame and fortune—in heart and hope—of its saloons, what a moral of price would be in the contrast.

Strange as the abrupt declaration of Mr. Thomas Longueville may seem, it was not the less true to the letter, though by no means so to the spirit in which it was interpreted. While, therefore, we leave him to stomach the meeting with his nephew with what digestion he may, a brief allusion to an episode, as yet unnoticed, will be necessary to lay the foundation for an explanation.

I have already said that as soon as my Oxford career commenced, so also did a taste for the road begin; and that during the first autumn of residence my visits to town were constant. On one of those occasions I attended a morning concert given by some German singers, who were the musical lions of the day. Immediately before me sat a graceful girl, in company with one of her own sex, whose faded satin *manteau*, and soiled ostrich feathers, did duty for a toilette of style and

pretension. As they rose to leave, I discovered that the youngest of my fair neighbours was Caroline G——, and I need hardly add that a most animated recognition followed. I saw them home, and, in due course, was introduced to the dame of the dingy suit and plume.

Mrs. —— bore a name that I could not hear without veneration. He from whom it was derived was a meteor, whose career had been as brief as it was brilliant. The lady's fame, indeed, had slighter claims to admiration; and I felt no small surprise at finding the daughter of my fastidious friend entrusted to her pilotage. I learnt, subsequently, that Major G—— had, in early life, known ——; that, upon his death, he had rendered many services to his wife (who, by her bereavement, was left, for the time, wholly unprovided for), and that, in fact, Caroline's present visit was the pretext for continuing a liberal aid to one whom the world seemed little disposed to countenance or assist.

He who selects the materials of his story

from real life, and uses passing events to point his moral, has no business with matter beyond the facts out of which they rise. Life is a drama, whose action and point may be sufficiently understood without admitting the audience behind the scenes.

It will be enough, then, in speaking of my acquaintance with this lady, simply to illustrate, by the examples she furnished, the position, that the blandishments of high talent without principle, the decking lax manners in the tinsel of ultra refinement, and the actual fostering of vice in the cant about liberality of opinion and scorn of prejudice, are more destructive to morality than positive profligacy, whose bane carries its antidote with it.

Caroline G—— was too much the child of impulse to have succeeded in hiding from her wary friend the secret of her heart, even had she made the attempt. But she thought of no concealment. Her preference for me (modesty prevents my using a more appropriate term) was as clearly expressed in

manner as if she had employed all the emphasis of language to declare it. The moment of its discovery—which was the first of her seeing us together—the woman of the world felt that there were within her reach materials capable of being moulded into the slaves of her will.

How the sorceress employed her magic it boots not to tell; peradventure the progress of her spells might be traced through the ledgers of full many of Folly's ministers in May Fair and its environs. Ebers might say—Bob Newman tell—and, could the walls of the Star and Garter speak out—but let that pass.

I cannot help thinking that he who despoils life of its romance does the actors in it but equivocal service. Were I not so persuaded, I might reveal how the most distinguished tragic actress that ever moistened kerchief within Drury Lane and Covent Garden was wont to sigh her love for the Montague from a bosom all passion—rump steaks and onions ; that the most sentimental of modern poets is

devoted to boiled tripe ; and the most ethereal of living Sapphos to hot rum and water in the forenoon. But the narrative must not stand still for any such digressions. Turn we to our " literary lady," imbibing, with a zest for which the ideal has no image, *potage à la Julienne*, and Moselle of unquestionable lineage, and poor Caroline, more poetic, but far more " perilous stuff."

In the whole scope of zoology there is not a creature of less perception than the male human animal in its teens—being well bred, and well found withal. If to this natural dulness you add the *dulcia oblivia*, which a cunning woman knows how to compound so artistically, it is fifty to one the patient is turned inside out before he reaches his majority. Suppose even the youth prone to thought (an extravagant conception, still possible), where is the time to set himself about it?

Take, for instance, an evening and a morning ; out of which construct a London day. First, the dinner of your *gens comme il faut* : what is there favourable to philosophy in

that? Next, say the opera: do people reflect to the strains of Grisi and Persiani?—while Taglioni is floating like a spirit of air, or Cerito bounding like a hunted chamois? Supper follows—with its ices, fruits, liqueurs, and sighs; and from dreams, to which he is lulled by the memories of passing sweet music, rises the student of the world to Kensington Gardens, in lieu of the groves of Academus; to the gentle tournament of glances in Routine Row, instead of the rough exercises of the gymnasium.

Well, thus sped our lives at the epoch of this episode: Mrs. — writing metaphysics, and faring sumptuously; Caroline cultivating love and light literature; and Hyde Marston paying the piper. Many a *rouleau* it would have saved me, had I sent the matron, at the time, to Satan half as earnestly as I have since made that consignment. Nothing could exceed the industry and *tact* with which she promoted our intimacy. Her bearing was lackered over with a dazzling polish; smiling —“ye gods! how she would smile!”—and

pouring notes from her crow-quill as never rained notes before.

Tell me not that Fancy is bred "or in the heart or in the head:" her seat is considerably lower. Was the *gibier* or the vintage of the preceding evening more excellent than common—lo! there arrived from —— Street a triangular *billet*, breathing Sabeian odours, such as the Nine never tasted, nor ever sang. Your old-world swans were wont to warble upon their sips of Castaly; modern singing-birds require fluids of more power and flavour.

During three or four months this pleasant intercourse continued, with as brief interruption as the nature of my position permitted. That it mainly contributed to the catastrophe which occasioned my extempore retreat from the University, will be imagined. The simile of chaff before the wind conveys a lame idea of the fashion in which a youth of spirit, living on the road between Oxford and London, with a home "at both ends," as the coachmen say, gets rid of his capital. Mine went at an uncommon pace, equalled

only by the speed at which my name was finding its way into day-books and ledgers.

Some short period before the crisis arrived, a fact became manifest, which even my ultra-heedlessness could not overlook. This was the nature of Caroline G——'s sentiments. Had I been a frozen stock-fish, instead of a young gentleman with a temperature by no means at zero, I could not have blinked it. Probably it was the more readily discovered because it was, certainly, a thing I did not desire. The first incense of my heart had been offered to her sister ; and the subsequent excitement and dissipation of my life had not put to flight the vision of " Love's young dream." Furthermore, Caroline possessed a *fierté* of character not at all to my taste. Extremes rarely sympathize ; and I had too strong a dash of the devil in myself to covet it in a lady-love.

We parted : my thoughts, indeed, went with her to the cottage of the Severn ; but they rested there on one, to whom they had loved to wander, however I seemed occupied

with other fancies and impressions. All of pure feeling that a course of folly (why do I not call it by its proper name, vice?) had left me, linked itself with the memory of Charlotte G——. Love it was not; for the spirit was yet too volatile to receive a permanent impression; though the heart glowed with tenderness and admiration. I had reason, too, for believing she regarded me with partiality: there were the lines thrown into my boat when last I visited the cottage; and could I be mistaken as to their meaning?

Thus I mused during the few moments given to reflection, as thoughts of home, calm scenes, and gentle companions, strove, though vainly, with the boisterous presences among which I lived.

The abrupt suspension of this career has been told. Bad as the reality was, however, it bore no comparison to the version which report contrived to give to it. Twenty years ago there were no railways to enable people to hear and see for themselves at half a dozen places at once. Excellent as travelling was,

do the best you might, Oxon and Salop were a day's journey apart; and the variations that may be played upon a story in twenty-four hours require no great exercise of imagination to conceive. Besides its ordinary coadjutors, too, in this instance rumour had many auxiliaries. The sudden disappearance of my father and mother from the hall had a disastrous look; and the manner of the former previous to his departure was calculated to do me any thing but service.

The news that Uncle Tom had shuffled off his mortal coil, made a greater sensation around B—— than did the French revolution or the earthquake at the Caraccas. By some it was asserted that he had made away with himself; while some whispered that another hand had helped him on his ghostly journey, with allusions, in which his nephew's name was broadly hinted at. Then my own affair came out in a *variorum* edition. According to some, I had made free with my landlord's spoons; and others protested there was the blood of at least one proctor on my head.

All men agreed that murder, suicide, and robbery, had been done ; of which I was the hero, in some way or other. In the midst of all this came the *coup de théâtre* — the announcement that one of Major G—'s daughters had run off; the elopement being laid at my door.

One incident, at least, in the tragedy, had not been exaggerated. Let a hurried and brief allusion to it be understood as evidence of the bitter regret with which it is made, and not as proof that the event has faded, or ever might fade, from my memory.

The announcement of Mr. Longueville's death, with which I appeared to be involved in some mysterious way, called into instant and irresistible existence a passion that waited but for the spark that should transform it into a devouring flame. Caroline G—— was not born with the spirit that teaches to love wisely. With her, to love was to endow the being selected with “ all her worldly goods ” — with all the energies—affections—hopes—of this life and eternity. I was in peril from

some cause : she might aid me — the possibility was enough.

On leaving her father's roof, she hastened to Cheltenham. There her anxieties were relieved ; but the reaction was full of evil consequences. The presence of the revived uncle was death to the nephew. Uncle Tom was a gentleman of more than modern propriety ; had he lived centuries back, they had gained for him the title of *preux chevalier*. The maiden wrote him the secret of her heart : and, therefore, he jumped to the conclusion that his sister's son was a specimen of passing profligacy. Perhaps there had been better wisdom in arriving by more ordinary logic at a deduction ; but the world, for the most part, adopts a similar process. He departed for town, having arranged for the object of his concern a present security, as he deemed it.

The dust which his chariot disturbed had scarce time to settle ere it was again whirled to the air by the eager wheels that followed. On the morning that succeeded the supper in Portland Place, a note was delivered at

Long's, such as but too often has passed the portal of that epitome of London life. The fatal facility which the connexion already described afforded, suggested a home to the fugitive. Caroline at once placed herself under the protection of the friend whose guest she was in the autumn. We met. Is the tale of passion ever told, save with one consequence, when love speaks, and youth listens?

In the present instance, at all events, it was not destined to any deviation from the general rule. With words of burning force she ran over the short but passionate history of the past. Alas! for the eloquence in which eyes and spirit plead to their too faithful interpreter—the heart. The song that betrayed to me the secret of a passion I had attributed to another, she had written: a thousand incidents of the preceding autumn, which at the time seemed trifles, if observed at all, were placed before me in their true character, and I marvelled that their meaning had ever escaped me. Why was the speaker so fair? and her language an oratory so omnipotent?

Could words be palpable? — could syllables live, that I felt their pressure upon cheek and lip?

“Caroline, Caroline,” said I, rising, and taking her trembling hand in mine, “talk not to me thus, and, for mercy’s sake, *look* not so; there is ruin—irretrievable ruin in it for us both. Let us part now, while we can; in honour, at least: another moment such as this, and our destinies are beyond our control. I have not the power to leave this place; for Heaven’s pity, leave *me*!”

While I spoke she also had risen: her glance was fearful: for an instant she struggled with an emotion that turned brow and cheek to fire, then left them cold and white as marble; and, rushing forward, and dashing herself upon my breast, in words, that seemed convulsions, she gasped:—

“Never—never — I will never leave you; my destiny is fixed! — here I live, or here I die!”

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE COLLEGE LIFE.

Parliamentary bills ordered to lie on the table—A symposium—Cousins of York, not of Buckingham—Gymnastics of the Isis—Courses of the Corn-market, not Newmarket—A new verse of the groves of Blarney—A fighting-cock—Bantam—Mannikin of the truly noble.

"Come, spur away ;
I have no patience for a longer stay,
But must go down,
And leave the chargeable noise of this great town.
I will the country see,
Where old simplicity,
Though hid in grey,
Doth look more gay
Than foppery in plush and scarlet clad.
Farewell, you city wits, that are
Almost at civil war ;
'Tis time that I grow wise, when all the world grows mad."

RANDOLPH.

"While I play the good husband at home, my son and
servants spend all at the university."

SHAKSPEARE.

CHAPTER VIII.

The eve of a brilliant spring day, in the last week of April, restored me again to my rooms in Oxford, and the following morning I found Maher up to the elbows in a vast chaos of pasteboard and miscellaneous paper; in short, sorting my cards, notes of invitation, whose dates had long expired, and reminiscences of other notes, in a similar dilemma. Having paid off as many of these latter as the state of the supplies authorized, and put off others with promises to pay, it became necessary to discharge a few of the still more absolute obligations, and an immediate wine party was resolved upon.

To this intent all my old friends (boon-

companions, who never had the impertinence to ask whether my abrupt disappearance from the University was the effect of a natural or artificial death) were laid under embargo for an early night, together with some fresh-men, who entered during my absence, and had brought letters of introduction to me.

Of these, two were brothers, Launcelot and Panton Ridsdale, cousins on my mother's side, some three or four degrees removed, and sons of a Yorkshire gentleman of easy fortune. I had never before met them, nor, indeed, were our families on visiting terms, probably because some hundred and fifty miles between their respective abodes were adverse to intimacy. The eldest I had frequently heard of as a rickety boy, reared with as much art and care as the most tender hot-house exotic; a description which by no means prepared me for the style of person I found him. The youngest was represented as an indolent, dull lad, of lax morals, and, consequently, intended for the church.

We will not stay to examine what claims

to truth the report possesses which assigns to Oxford a great decrease of late years in its contributions to the excise. The change, if it has been effected, is one of the most notable moral revolutions of these times of mutability. In my day, the simple act of putting on the academic suit assured an assumption of its other habits also. I could not take it on my conscience to say, in my experience, I had knowledge of a member of the University (the provosts and heads of colleges of course excepted, who upon all ordinary occasions confined themselves to toast and water, and only on galas went the length of lemonade) that did not as a practice daily consume as much strong drink as would have overloaded tenfold his own bulk of the best sponge.

Probably art will never increase the facilities for slaking drought which were familiar to mankind a quarter of a century ago. The night that re-opened my rooms at the perfumer's might be quoted as a favourable sample of a "dewy eve" of that period. The

company consisted of about a dozen : the drinkables could scarcely have been numbered without the assistance of logarithms. You might have made some shrewd hits on character, by observing the fashion of each drinker's consumption. The superfine men confined themselves to hock negus and curaoa grog. The correct drank bishop, Burgundy punch, iced claret, hollands, and Krchen Wasser ; the less particular dabbled in indige-nous gin, hot, with sugar, cognac similarly compounded, London stout, Burton ale, clay pipes, and tobacco in all grades, from Oro-nooko to negro-head.

As the Ridsdales had come to Oxford with but a slight introduction, and only a few days previously, this was their *dbut*, and it was not a favourable one. Launcelot, who was an athletic young man, appeared to be a bluff northern sportsman, with a full share of his country's keenness ; but, withal, deficient in that peculiar refinement which redeems the intercourse of college society, however coarseness may preponderate in its pursuits.

His manner was confident and assuming : ever on the watch for such fortuitous occasions as afforded an opportunity for aggression, he would push the advantage afforded him beyond the limits of good nature and good taste. Unlike its usual effects, however, opposition did not seem to rouse or irritate him : left to himself, he would proceed, from disagreeable allusions, to the verge of offence ; but, if interfered with, he would compromise, or abandon the controversy. A commanding person and stern bearing gave great force to the expression of a strong mind, and a vocabulary by no means stinted in materials for argument or reply ; and yet it was strange to see how easily and effectually an animated rejoinder or remark succeeded in putting him to silence. I could not avoid being struck with this ; others also observed it, and some turned it to no very social account : it was clear that he had not made a favourable impression.

Panton Ridsdale had nothing in common with his brother. He was without a shade of

offence in his character, and, indeed, pretty much without any thing else. No Mussulman ever cultivated ease with more relish. His ideas of liquids were evidently good ; but he would not put himself to trouble in carrying them out. Whatever was within reach of his arm, and that which was to be had by the least extension of it, he invariably ingulfed : champagne followed stout ; *eau-de-vie de Dantzic* succeeded Hodgson's pale ale ; and whisky toddy acted as *avant courier* for Châblis or Moselle, as accident made each most easily available.

“ A pair of characters, those Yorkshire-cured relatives of yours,” said Hervey, who was the last to retire, as his custom was : “ a brace of very odd fish ; but the smallest is the best flavoured ; the first-born is far from the style of person one would make a point of being introduced to.”

I was entirely of the same way of thinking, but held my peace, for the sake of kith and kin.

At the period of which I write, gymnastics

did not form regular items in a course of polite education; but they were not the less generally and energetically cultivated for all that. For want of those established arenas which the wisdom of Greece and Rome provided for the use of such citizens as desired to exercise themselves in personal trials of strength and courage, there was, in almost every town and village in England, some spot conventionally set aside for passages at arms.

The corn-market in Oxford was the peculiar place of fisty-cuffs for that city; where "gown," "town," and clown were wont to meet, and study phrenology after a fashion of their own; in so far resembling the modern science, that bumps on the head at all events helped them to their conclusions. Not many nights in the week passed in which these philosophers did not indulge in their experiments; the space in front of the Star being to *Alma Mater* what Flanders used to be to the rest of Europe. If a man was discovered sauntering there after sunset, it was understood as a quiet announcement that his blood

was a little slow of circulation—in short, that he was a customer for a row.

About a week after the party already described, I was on my way home from a dinner at Witney, by the light of a moon, such as Douglas compared to his shield; and, as I passed the top of the High Street in the direction of the *debateable* ground, a clear treble, with the whole strength of the proprietor's lungs, was pouring forth the rollicking air of the "Groves of Blarney." The verse that the singer was executing at the moment was something to the following effect:—

" Radin' and writin'
We do delight in;
All soorts of fightin',
 They are our joys:
For drinkin', atin',
And proctor batin',
We bang the state, in
 Regard of boys."

The identity of the minstrel was as unequivocal to me as his *status* to such of the public as might chance to fall in his way. It was Maher, and Maher was drunk, or "glorious,"

as that condition of ebriety is politely termed, wherein the patient considers himself a better man than Alexander the Third of Macedon, and is prepared to do to death any one disposed to gainsay it.

As there was probability of some adventure speedily occurring to a knight-errant that chose the corn-market wherein to throw down his gauntlet, Hervey, who was my companion, persuaded me (without exercising, indeed, any extraordinary importunity) to wait, and see what might come of it.

The light of the full moon was streaming on the gladiatorial arena, which the Irish champion was patrolling in every variety of mathematical line, except the straight; so that if any passenger happened to be pursuing a right line in the direction that he seemed to be taking, a collision was not only possible, but probable.

It took a very short time to work out the problem. From the Star gateway a figure issued, enveloped in an ample great-coat — a devil of a strapping fellow, big enough to

have slain and eaten the little bully. At all events, as the man of might crossed the street, the man of mettle ran into him, apparently on purpose. This brought them both up, "all standing," as the naval phrase is; and, as they stood eyeing each other, the melodist again broke forth:—

"Readin' and writin'
We do delight in;
All soorts of fightin' :"—

"Silence!" shouted the man in the great-coat, in a voice trembling with rage, deep and hoarse, as if it came out of the mouth of a coal-pit; "cease your noise, ye drunken Irish blackguard, or I'll help ye to sing with the other side of your mouth."

"It would be a pity to rob you entirely, my poor fellow," replied the tenor; "for the devil a much music ye have to spare. No doubt as it is your servant often thinks his master's calling when the donkeys is praying for a shower."

"Do you know who you're talking to, you

ruffian?" cried the first speaker, striding up to his adversary, and confronting him as Gulliver did the Emperor of Lilliput.

"It isn't a *four*-footed ass that's in it, any how," said the Irishman, looking up, as if he were reading the address on a finger-post, while the crown of his hat was on a level with the pit of the gownsman's stomach; "though may be I wouldn't be sure of *that*, only for the light of the parish lantern."

"You infernal, saucy little rascal!" exclaimed the member of the University; "I'll teach you how to insult a gentleman;" and he lent my master of the horse a box on the ear, that swept him off his legs, as one clears the table of a spider with the dash of a pocket handkerchief.

The conversation and its consequence took not a tenth of the space in the action that the narration has occupied. I had just time enough to imagine that the voice of the second speaker was not unknown to me, when the catastrophe ensued, and my un-

lucky serving-man measured his length on his native element.

“ By Jove ! he’ll be put to death, Hervey,” said I, “ unless we cover his retreat. I shouldn’t mind his getting a good thrashing, as it might help to sober him ; but, if he’s killed, there will be a coroner’s inquest——”

Thus far my speech had proceeded, when Maher leaped on his legs, and, giving himself a shake, flew at his assailant like a game-cock, or any animal more pugnacious, if such there be.

By this time the adjacent courts and public-houses were pouring their tribute of disorderlies into the scene of action, wherein such a brace of combatants appeared as, probably, were never pitted since the encounter between David and Goliath of Gath. Some were shouting for a ring, and others cheering on the mannikin, who was peppering away at the giant with prodigious energy. As Hervey and I approached the place of conflict, Maher succeeded in planting a blow, like the kick of

a horse, in that part of his antagonist's person which is genteelly distinguished, in pugilistic phrase, as "the victualling department." As a specimen of the *vis vivida*, it was a phenomenon, and prostrated the receiver more speedily and effectually than a ball through the pericardium, from one of Joe Manton's "French-scratch barrels," at twelve paces.

A fight is far too popular a thing to be permitted to terminate abruptly; and you find that, as long as a couple of their fellow-sinners can stand up and belabour one another, the mob is officiously polite in assisting them to their legs, whenever the chances of war have reduced either to the horizontal. The moment, therefore, that the patrician kissed the earth, fifty volunteers rushed to pick him up, and as many more to clap the plebeian upon the back, and whisper advice for "licking the big un."

But both parties had their trouble for their pains. No sooner was the fallen again placed upright, than, turning his back on the little bantam, who was "coming up" in a highly

scientific attitude, he went off at speed, in the direction of the High Street, with the rabble in full chorus at his heels. Fear had given wings to his flight; and he was soon clear of the mob: but,—“O! world of slippery turns!” a guardian of the night, who was walking his beat, as usual, in his sleep, stood in the course of the fugitive, and the pair dropped, after the manner of clown and pantaloone in the pantomime.

A qualm of humanity prompted Hervey and I to go to the poor hunted wretch's assistance; for though his miserable poltroonery shocked, its very extremity excited our pity. We lifted him up, more dead than alive, and placed his back against the door of a house, for he was in a state of insensibility. It was Launcelot Ridsdale! He was as quick in recognising me; and a flush of agony crossed his face at the discovery.

“I hope your fall has not seriously hurt you,” said I: “we were turning the corner as you ran into this watchman of little vigilance——.” But he saw through the *ruse*;

and the instinct of manhood, for the moment, conquered constitutional dastardy.

“ You saw it all, both of you,” said he, with bitter fierceness : “ I know it ;—and you, Mr. Marston, set on your creature to make me a scorn and a by-word—*remember that!* I give you no thanks for your insolent courtesy. You have done me deadly wrong—*remember that!*” and he passed from us, in the direction of Christchurch.

With the tray of potted meats and fish that, in those days, used to go to a quiet University supper, the gladiator of my household appeared. The spirit of his intoxication had evaporated, and left behind it that owlish counterfeit of gravity which is the most soul-moving of all the phases of drunkenness.

“ And so, you rascal,” I began, as he entered, “ you have been drunk, and fighting with one of your master’s relations. Don’t dare to add a lie to your offence—I was present, and saw him, very properly, knock you down ; and ——”

“ Never say a word more about it, sir,”

he replied, with a most diabolical attempt at a gracious smile, and a hiccup that convulsed his ventricle like an earthquake. "I beg you'll not name it;—I've no animosity to the gentleman—not a taste in the world; and, by the same token, he did not hurt me at all at all—devil a hurt. It's the bether of it I am; it is, by J——! I mane, *that's* a fact."

"Leave the room, you drunken brute," I exclaimed, my patience utterly upset by his coolness, "and to-morrow, when you've slept off the fumes of your debauch, I'll find a method to bring you to your senses. Get out of the room instantly!"

"See that, now," he muttered, obeying the order at a pace that a lively snail would have been ashamed of; "see that!—I've said I bare no malice; and that doesn't seem to plaze." Then, after musing for a minute, he continued, lingering at the half-opened door: "Sure, sir, I'll shake hands with him in the morning; and, barring he's a Turk, that *must* settle it. But there's no continting some people—there's not, by ——! *it's* a fact."

CHAPTER IX.

THE SERIO AND BUFFO OF METAPHYSICS.

The mysteries of life and death—The gay and the *grave*—Do “coming events cast their *shadows* before?”—To die, to sleep—An episode about colour—The fortunes of a nigger—English slavery—“Am I not your broder?”—Not a bit of it—“*Hue* makes the man, and want of it, the fellow.”

“When the proud steed shall know why man restrains
His fiery course, or drives him o’er the plains;
When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
Now wears a garland, an Egyptian god;
Then shall man’s pride and dullness comprehend
His action’s, passion’s, being’s use and end.”

Essay on Man, Epist. i.

“Why will you vainly struggle with your fate?”

DRYDEN.

“To laugh were want of goodness and of grace,
And to be grave exceeds all power of face.”

POPE.

CHAPTER IX.

As these gleanings of memory do not pretend to the dignity of a regular composition, I might, perhaps, have permitted the introduction of an actor, in no way connected with the development of my story, to have passed without observation. But as many so situated will

———“fret their hour upon the stage,
And then be seen no more,”

it may be convenient to explain the purpose I would serve by bringing them upon the scene.

The prevailing design, with the majority of modern writers of fiction, appears to be the

inculcation of the doctrine that metaphysics are as capable of demonstration as any mathematical proposition. The intention is, no doubt, a well-meaning one ; but the theory is as false as mischievous. The eternal laws by which the economy of life is governed are in mercy hidden from us. Blind as we are, the excellence of such a providence must be evident. Endurance of the condition of mortality would be wholly inconsistent with the property of omniscience : who could tolerate existence were the future written on the page that records the past ? It was Infinite Grace that sent us into the world with understandings limited and finite : ungratefully do they acknowledge the blessing who seek to analyze the eternal system by means of that reason whose views extend not beyond the experience of the hour that engages them.

It is not to question the providence, or the love of the Eternal, that, in the course of this narrative, instances will be adduced whose issues shall seem opposed to moral justice. My aim is to reconcile to their dispensations

those who suffer, by showing that such consequences are common to the disposition of human life, however philosophy may fail to discover or account for their design.

As Hervey and I made our way homewards from the scene of the combat related in the last chapter, his manner lost all the gay and playful spirit that distinguished it in the previous part of the day. Our route led by the High Street, gorgeous and teeming with its stores of priceless architecture. As Scott has sung of Melrose, he who would see Oxford as best it may be seen, should "visit it by the pale moonlight." In this guise it was then exhibited to us. Upon Hervey the effect was evidently a painful one. He was naturally of a sanguine temperament; full of gentle and loving sympathies, and scrupulous of honour as a knight of the olden chivalry. The solemn grandeur into which we had passed from a vile and pestilent crowd was a contrast too powerful for his keen sensibility.

As we slowly wended forward, he was wrapped in deep thought; and it was not till

some time after we were seated at the supper already spoken of, that conversation and good cheer worked their common effects upon him. Even then the bias of his mind broke out, apparently forced into words, rather than spoken with deliberate will.

“Marston,” (I give the substance of several observations made during the time he remained with me) “is not the doctrine of free agency a palpable fallacy, seeing that the instruments wherewith to execute our purposes are so frequently withheld from us? I cannot but feel deeply for that unhappy young man, whose sad humiliation we have just witnessed. Sent into this life, morally or physically, ‘but half made up,’ is it just, is it consistent, that we suffer for the want of such properties as it seemed good to the Eternal to deny us? God forgive me if I sin in arguing thus, and forefend that any accident should lead me into a strait too perplexing for the strength of soul or body wherewith it has pleased *Him* to endow me!”

If, in this latter passage, that prophetic

sympathy, wherewith I believe all natures to be endowed in the proportion to their sensibilities, gave utterance to its mystic influences, never were coming events more fitly heralded by the shadows that foretold them.

Some three years after we had left Oxford, Hervey accompanied me to a race-meeting in the north of England. The favourite for the great event belonged to an old and intimate friend of his, one of the most noted men of the day for reckless eccentricities. His wife was as much distinguished for her beauty and meekness; and, while the preliminaries of the race were being adjusted, Hervey stood at her side in the Stand. The favourite lost; and shortly afterwards the disappointed owner appeared.

“Put on your shawl; the carriage is in waiting; I’m going home instantly,” said he to his gentle partner, who instinctively shrank from the fiercely sullen expression of her husband’s look.

The tone in which this was spoken drew

my attention (although I occupied a remote corner of the building); turning to learn the cause, I saw Hervey approach them. I felt that there was mischief at hand, and forced my way forward as quickly as the crowd permitted.

“Come, come, old fellow;” he expostulated, “because you’ve lost your own anticipated pleasure, don’t deprive Mrs. —— of hers: let the carriage wait till the racing is over; your people are pretty well practised to such things.”

At this instant, he whom he addressed seized his wife violently with his left hand, and, as he led her away, struck the speaker with the other a blow that all but brought him to the ground. So monstrous an aggression paralysed the by-standers, and, before surprise and indignation found words, I removed Hervey from the spot.

We entered our hotel, and ascended to his chamber without exchanging a word. He bolted the door as we entered, and then threw himself upon the bed; but still he did not

speaking, and I knew not how to break so ominous a silence. At length he asked—

“Has he left the print of his hand upon my face?”

“You are unmarked,” said I; “but that in no way affects this most unhappy chance; it would be absurd to pretend ignorance of the only alternative that remains to you, or of that which I am so well aware you will adopt. Upon me rely in all things; you have but to name your wish, and it is done.”

“Long and well as I have known him,” he continued, rather soliloquizing than addressing me; “treacherous, infirm, as I have proved his temper, I never believed that baseness or cowardice belonged to it. But to use me like a hound, to buffet me in a presence which he knew was a shield to him, cheap as he might hold my personal prowess, was it not horrible, unnatural, unmanly? I have need of counsel. I will ask it of my own heart.”

After a short pause he continued, “My

friend, leave me for a while ; dine, and come to me at seven. Fortunately, my pistols are here ; adieu ! Whatever may be the resolution upon which I act, it will be the best that my powers of mind enable me to arrive at : if weak or erring, *surely we shall not suffer for want of such properties as Eternal Justice has seen fit to deny us.*"

I went to him, pressed his hand, and promised as he requested. His manner was calm, full of courteous benevolence, and without token of excitement, the only trace of which was the more than usual brilliance of eye with which he watched my departure.

The time that intervened I passed alone, as much from unfitness for society, as to avoid the questions with which I should have been assailed. The first stroke of seven brought me to his door ; an undefinable anticipation of evil was on me as I opened it. Too true was the foreboding ! There, where so lately I had parted from him in the golden noon of life and promise, lay he, whom I

sought, stark and stiff; the instrument of death still clutched in the hand wherewith the mortal had put on immortality.

A noble spirit was his of whom this over-true tale is told. Surely, if ever human frailty moved the recording angel, we may hope that, as he wrote it down, he "dropp'd a tear, and blotted it out for ever."

Among those, with whom I have been on terms of intimacy, whose lives were cast in the most eccentric orbits, singularly marked by the grave and *grotesque*, was the early career of a young Lancastrian. As he still lives, I refrain from naming him; indeed, I give this sketch of his history chiefly upon the principle that troops are marched from the funeral of a comrade to the air of a jig or strathpsey.

Robert, or, as he was better known, Bob ——, was the son of a person who, being stationed at one of our West Indian islands, in a mercantile capacity, married a native woman, by whom he acquired a considerable fortune. On returning to England,

he settled in a flourishing commercial town of the north, where he presently died, leaving a “dismal” widow behind him, and some dozen pledges of affection, coloured alternately like the keys of a piano. The eldest, a son, a frank, *natural*, kind-spirited fellow, was of Christian dye: Bob, in his boyhood, *flat* and in his maturity *sharp*, had a countenance “in a concatenation accordingly.” His feet were large and flat, and so was his nose; his fingers were gnarled and lank, like the talons of a bird of prey; while the complexion and good-humoured expression of his visage reminded you of an ourang affecting the amiable.

Beneath that ill-favoured cuticle dwelt a spirit burning with ambition; nature had given him a head to think, and a hand (or a claw) to execute. He was not without taste and talent, his manners were good, his conversation amusing, and his bearing gentlemanly. Yet, with all these sterling properties, the paths to honourable estate and distinction were as hermetically closed against

him, as if he had escaped piping-hot from Hades, with the fresh fumes of its brimstone as pungent upon him as *sal volatile*. And wherefore? Because, as Byron sings of Beppo—

“He had a face the colour of mahogany.”

I forget by what accident I first made his acquaintance; but the social ostracism under which I found him suffering produced a feeling that he soon contrived to turn into intimacy. For two or three years he hung about me like my shadow; paid visits unasked, when I was at home; and never failed being in town when he learnt that there was a chance of my being there.

The more obvious it became that people fought shy of him, the more the sense of justice—a predominant feeling of my nature—was roused in his behalf. In spite of many a scurvy joke, he had always a seat in my tilbury, and at my table, or an arm in Bond Street, to all of which he attached himself with unfailing constancy. I even got him

into a house or two where they were not over-particular, and, to do him justice, wherever he could insert any fraction of his frame, the remainder was safe of a lodgment:

“Use lessens marvel,” says Scott: there never was a more unimpeachable truism. By degrees the dark became less and less sombre; the dingy assumed the clear; and anon I could sit *vis-à-vis* a young gentleman who might have passed muster for a Hottentot, look in his face, and yet “forget it all.” Philosophy, science, and art, are indebted to chance for many of their most remarkable discoveries; and thus did a trifle first bring vividly before me the fact that I had a friend not as other men were.

During the first year of our acquaintance, he accompanied me to B——, for a few days’ hunting. I mounted him; and, at the instance of Maher (who probably did it in the spirit of his country’s devilment), furnished him with all else that became a modern disciple of Diana. It was on a bright spring morning that he was to make his first essay;

my father was sitting with me at breakfast; time wore on, and we were wondering at the lengthened toilette of our guest, when the door opened, and he appeared. A more extraordinary apparition was never seen out of a stage-play. How shall I attempt to describe it? As he stalked across the room, the total revolution in his costume added, to all seeming, another furlong to his stature; while his long black head, springing from the collar of a scarlet frock, was like nothing in nature but the petal of a gigantic fuchsia.

The old gentleman looked aghast: between the extremity of his politeness and his amazement he ran great risk of apoplexy; when nature triumphed, and, *malgré* the napkin thrust into his mouth, he threw himself back in his chair, and fairly shouted in a convulsion of delight. I confess, I couldn't wholly preserve my own gravity; but the author of our pleasantry was by no means moved. I don't think he had any idea that we were laughing at him. Whether he had or not, it did not put him out of countenance, for he straightway

proceeded to embowel a pigeon-pie with great earnestness.

This was my first hint : another followed fast on its kibes. About this time, my Lancashire friend took the scarlet fever, in consequence of being exposed to a field-day of the —— Dragoon Guards, whose head-quarters were then at Manchester. He forwarded an early account of the attack to me, with such suggestions, touching a remedy, as my regard for him did not allow me to slight. I lost no time in writing to one of the most popular men in the regiment, Captain ——, now Colonel C——, to inquire what chance there was of a vacancy, and how such might best be made available, at the same time stating the name of the candidate, whom he had seen with me. I give his answer in his own words :—

“ My dear Marston—I am rejoiced to hear that Mr. Robert —— has selected the —— Dragoon Guards as the medium of his introduction to the army. Of course, on your account, he commands my best offices. I am

aware of his musical talents, and shall speak favourably of them to the master of our band ; but let me know, in confidence, whether his inclination leans towards the kettle-drums or the cymbals. I strongly recommend the latter, as I think a turban would decidedly become him."

Circumstances brought to a somewhat abrupt termination our three years' intimacy ; but still I had occasional intimations of his career. He took a degree at Cambridge, where a certain set patronised him when he gave a dinner, and, in the spirit of an honourable ambition, began to look about for some profession or office that should give him social position. On this generous pursuit he entered with enthusiasm, an unblemished character, the aid of friends, and ample resources. A distinguished lawyer was consulted as to the propriety of his entering the Temple. He was a wag, and spake thus :—

"It is my opinion, there exists no precedent for such a step. I never saw a gentleman of colour called to the bar, except at the Old

Bailey : a black face under a white wig would look like a mourning-coach in a snow-storm."

His hopes in theology fared no better. People were not so straight-laced a dozen years ago as they are now ; but, since the Reformation, could a congregation have been found to stand a parson with a face like a piece of his cassock, immersing, in the snowy folds of a cambric kerchief, a snout the colour of an undertaker's truncheon ?

In diplomacy it was the same. Your *attaché*, it is true, has little to do ; but he *is* expected to take out her Excellency's poodles to air ; and that was forbidden to one who might have said, with Lear, "Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart, bark at me." . . . Need I point to the moral of my chapter, or pause to assign a reason for turning aside from the highway of my narrative to record episodes such as these ? In the sorrows of mortality we have our best assurances of another and a better life.

"Then shall man's pride and dulness comprehend
His actions', passions', being's use and end!"

CHAPTER X.

ALL FOR LOVE.

A suburban village — Rustic, with a spice of the Sapphic Richmond — Stars and garters! — The way and the means — Oxford correspondence — Good resolutions. Hell's pavement not a wooden one — Sweet are the uses of adversity — A Jew's eye.

“Think of the gladness of our youthful prime—
It cometh not again—that golden time!”

The Commer's Book.

“I could not love, I'm sure,
One who in love were wise.”

COWLEY.

“Here is ado, and lock up honesty and honour from the
access of gentle visiters.”

SHAKSPEARE.

CHAPTER X.

There was not a prettier, or more rural village, within an easy ride of London, than Thames Ditton, twenty years ago. But time has been busy with it, even as with ourselves ; and that perilous wrinkle, the South-western Railway, whatever it may have done in utility, has sadly damaged it in the matter of the sylvan. To the left of those who entered the common from town, there stood (and still stands) a rustic public-house, with its sign suspended from the branch of an ancient elm, serving as an appropriate entrance to a picturesque green lane. Whoso trod the velvet sward that constituted its footpaths, or wheeled over the smooth gravel of the

drive that wound between them, reached, in a short quarter of a mile, a spot that Flora herself might have selected for a retreat. It was a fairy nook, blushing throughout the year with myriads of roses, and breathing fragrance fresh and odorous as ever zephyr rifled from morning violets.

Within, nestled a cottage, such as “youthful poets dream of when they love.” Sweet bower of beauty ! since the winged hours I passed within thee, my home has been beside the azure Leman, my path among the emerald valleys of Tyrol ; yet never have I seen aught that might compare with thee, albeit thou didst arise at the bidding of a villanous Israelite, who dealt in woollens, and every other species of *fleecery*, in St. Mary Axe.

The historian and biographer have each a delicate duty to perform ; but how infinitely more perplexing is his task who ventures to grace his own tale ! With a true perception of the difficulty, I have lingered over the introduction to this chapter till I could gain

courage to proceed with my narrative. Need it be told that there lacked not an Eve for my Paradise — the Eden, where first was gathered from the tree of knowledge that mystic produce which realizes the fabled fruit of the Dead Sea?

Away with ye, base and sordid impulses! that, as I trace these records, whisper me to plead the temptation that assailed, in mitigation of the course pursued. The folly, the madness, the sin, that triumphed, found allies in the weakness of each. I seek not to soften terms or facts; peradventure, I should have urged that—

“Both were so young, and one so innocent”—

and, while all might blame, some at least would pity. But let it pass: life's great moral was vindicated, both in her fate, who has long ceased to suffer, and in his, whose penance is not yet complete.

To preserve the connexion of my incidents, we will return, for a moment, to the unexpected appearance of Caroline G—— at the

house of her literary friend. The struggle I made to dissuade her from a step my heart too eagerly seconded has been told. Probably, the arguments I used, and already in the reader's possession, exhausted my stock. At all events, I pressed no others; and, as the chimes of Richmond Church told eight on the evening of the memorable day when Caroline so prophetically declared "her destiny was fixed," four of Newman's posters, and a britzska—one of Burnand's best—deposited a party of three at the Star and Garter.

First descended a stripling, assisting, with fond and anxious caution, a girl, who passed rapidly into the house, and then handing out—

"Oh, shame!

Oh, sin! oh, sorrow! and oh, womankind!

How can you do such things, and keep your fame,

Unless this world, and t'other too, be blind?"

the more matured form of the metaphysic Sappho of the day! If bricks and mortar could speak; if walls had fingers to write, as well as ears to hear, what a story of human

passions, in all their phases, what a tale of joy and woe—trembling solicitude, and desperate recklessness, hope defeated, and fear confirmed—would be an autobiography of the Star and Garter, at Richmond!

Trifling as the episodes are that my experience could furnish, they would not be without their interest, or, it may be, their use. I might relate (as told to me on its terrace by the actor) strange passages in the life of her who, once a wandering stroller, then wore the proudest coronet in the land. I could reveal startling truths, connected with a conspiracy to plunder, enacted beneath its roof, the moral of whose *denouement* proved that “laws are *not* made for every degree;” but, as Horace says (and so does Blackstone), *sunt certi denique fines* — a law that, however interpreted, it behoves all who write to remember.

In the course of a drive, on the day after our arrival, accident brought us to the cottage already described. It was to be let; and, through a house-agent at Kingston, I concluded a year's bargain for it, at the rate

of forty guineas a month. Thither we forthwith removed ; and behold me, with less than nothing to support it—at the discreet age of seventeen —master of an establishment, the cost of which could not have been calculated at less than a couple of thousands a year.

“ It is now,” says Sir Peter, “ six months since Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men ; and I’ve been the most miserable dog ever since.”

Very similar was my dilemma. With all that nature and art could lavish on existence to make it a state of bliss ; at a season when novelty gives so keen a relish to enjoyment ; and born with feelings susceptible to agony of those emotions that stir the heart of the coldest ; I should not be believed did I say that life was not to me a dream of delirium. Still, it was the dream of a sleep that had its waking hours : the vision of a slumber on which reality would break often and rudely.

The contrast that the bearing of Caroline exhibited was very remarkable. Time, to-

her, seemed to have but one division—the present. The past was never recalled, the future never alluded to. When she sang, the lays selected told of joy and gladness, in light and graceful melodies; her language was playful and brilliant—her looks ever bright and radiant.

With the syren at my side, I scoffed at Fate, and put reflection at defiance. But there were moments when I was, *per force*, alone, and that, too, under circumstances far from calculated to engender agreeable thoughts. This was when, chancellor of a bankrupt exchequer, I applied myself to the affair of ways and means.

And here I cannot choose but pause to point out the signal advantage that the writers of fiction possess over those who indite fact. Your characters, in a novel, all eat, drink, dress, ride, and drive, as though the schemes of barter and currency were still undiscovered mysteries. The hero passes from Rome to St. Petersburg without even condescending to draw a cheque on his banker; and the he-

roine is as little encumbered with a purse as a pocket.

There you have one side of the medal—look at the reverse. Your matter-of-fact compiler adopts, for instance, the career of Viscount A—— for his theme, and finds himself called upon to state (notwithstanding it sadly stains the *couleur de rose* of his narrative), that the peer was compelled to forego a levee, because a rascally cordwainer refused to trust him with a pair of pumps ; or he becomes the biographer of Baron B——, and admits that his lordship was absent from such and such a drawing-room, in consequence of the reluctance of his laundress to accommodate him with his other shirt.

The straits into which I was driven at this time for money were terrible. The first fortnight of my residence at Thames Ditton had exhausted every shilling I possessed when I took the desperate step on which I had ventured, and how or where to replenish was the question. From Oxford Street there were no “*returns*,” though I offered my friend, the

tobacconist, five hundred per cent., to do a bill for £300, due on the day I came of age. My tailor, indeed, was good for fifty, which about cleared a week's bills, of course exclusive of rent.

Daily, on one plea or other, I rode express to town; now and then ferreted out some description of coin, and flew back again like one distracted. On how many occasions have I, emerging unsuccessful from the cellar of a Jew ragman, in Seven Dials, reached my Sybarite home—my turtle and iced Moselle—after bilking the Kingston “pike,” from sheer lack of a penny to pay the toll! Was it an especial Providence that prevented my stopping people on the highway?

“When things are as bad as they can be, they can't be any worse:” because I had seen the Liffey, I suppose, my case was selected to refute this consolatory old maxim. At all events, affairs hourly progressed with me in the degrees of worst. Letters from Oxford described the catastrophe that might result, if I absented myself any longer from the Uni-

versity ; ruin and disgrace awaited a delay of another week : two ladies of refinement, half a dozen fashionable domestics, and a Gothic villa, would be left (did I go), without such an amount of funds as would keep the cats of the establishment in skim-milk for the next twenty-four hours.

These were the facts, though I then saw them, of course, through the halo of romance. At all events, I acted, in one respect, like a chivalrous knight ; for, leaping into my saddle in less time than *Amadis de Gaul* or *Bayard* could have accomplished it, I was closeted with my Hebrew landlord, in St. Mary Axe.

There was nothing for it but making a clean breast. I had determined to tell Caroline that, for a space, she must content herself with a more humble abode ; and that I had so resolved was straightway communicated to him of the *cimiterical* nose. I found him a most favourable specimen of the “peeples” who worship mammon, and eschew griskin. He entered into my views ; told me he had

received an offer for his cottage, just as I had concluded for it; that he believed the applicant was still unsuited; and, if I would permit him to look over it on the morrow, he did not doubt but that it would be taken off my hands.

With a lighter heart than I had known for many a day, London and its cares were once more left behind, and I entered the bower of my lady-love in a spirit befitting the place and the occasion.

Smelfungus! never uplift thy brows thus, and distort the fair proportions of thy visage. What, an' if the gender of *thy* sect be doubtful, men there have been (some considerably before their time), are, and will be to the end of the chapter.

To bound from the back of the courser that has borne you through the soft air of a summer eve as smoothly as the clouds that float in the purple twilight; to meet glances full of love and kindness; to join at the board, that taste has spread, those on whom the gifts of beauty and fascination have been

lavishly bestowed ; your wine only less sparkling than the wit ; your peach only less fragrant and rosy than the lip that greets you : —say, might not such chance melt the heart of a frozen stock-fish ? Cease thy wonder, then, that they were too powerful for the philosophy of seventeen.

The rays of a golden moon lighted the luscious confusion of the dessert-table, as, drawing Caroline's arm through mine, leaving Mrs. —— to conclude a dalliance she had begun with a bottle of Malmsey Madeira, we passed out into the lawn, to share the incense that shrub and flower were offering to the Queen of Night.

The scene was ill-suited to lend aid to the words that faltered as I strove to utter them ; but the necessity was omnipotent, and I spoke of the jeopardy of my position, of the means I had devised to meet it, and required of my companion her opinions of my plans. A pause, that fell coldly on my heart (I had almost said, prophetically), ensued ; at length she said—

“Hyde, do you jeer or scoff when you bid me reflect? I know not the word; it is an issue foreign to my nature. I ACT: let others think.” The first jarring chord had been struck: we continued for a while longer to wander beneath the calm and holy moonlight; an atmosphere of peace was above and around us; but within — who shall interpret the spirit’s mysteries?

I had taken the precaution to order my letters—those at least from correspondents I could so far trust — to be addressed to the little public-house of which I have spoken, on the borders of the common. Thither, the following day, I repaired at the time the post usually arrived, which never occurred till an hour or two after noon. As I drew near, I perceived that the grassplot in front was occupied by a groom with two led horses, whose riders, apparently, had just dismounted.

A few paces farther enabled me to discover two persons at the door; instinct was on the alert, and I stopped.

One was a man of middle size, with a braided frock, hairy upper lip, and similar

military appointments; the other, a tall, strongly-cast figure, with an air wholly English; but, as the face was turned from me, my observation was limited to his general bearing. Something about it impressed me with the idea that I had seen him before; but, as circumstances compelled me alike to shun friend and foe, I retraced my steps to the cottage.

As I entered the gate, the tread of a horse sounded at my side; I paused; and the stranger with the *moustaches*, removing his hat, said, in a strong foreign accent—

“I come to see dis plaas—mit your leave, sare, I believe?”

Without awaiting my reply, he threw the reins to his groom, and, alighting, passed onwards with me, as only men from beyond the seas can do, without affording one an excuse for handing them back again by their noses.

The cottage door was open, as were the windows that led upon the green terrace that encircled it. I passed through that of the little library, and the stranger followed my example.

“I shall not give troble,” he observed; “I ondersdand the *ensemble*, it is var pretty, and shall do vor me var well.”

Refreshments were brought in, of which he partook as one who desired to prolong his visit. Prepossessions are guides not given us without purpose. Mine had declared against him from the first. His manners were good, but there was a hawk-like sharpness of feature and keenness of eye that I liked not.

“You have had a long ride,” I remarked; “but the road is full of interest; I traverse it almost daily, and still find new views of nature and society to amuse me; my rides, however, are, for the most part, solitary ones; possibly you were not alone?”

“Yes, I—sdat is—no, I vas not; a friend wash mit me—yonge gentleman, var fond to mount horseback; meine Got! vonderful to make *route*!—he part mit me at—vhat ye call?—Kingstone. It vasht vell he did, he rode mit soch *frénésie*; ‘shlow and sure’ ish goot maxem.”

“You found no difficulty, I hope, in making

your way here? The turn, out of the public road, did not puzzle you?"

"Oh, no! there was a leetle inn that did tell"——

"Ah! at the corner of the lane; I wish your companion had not deserted you. I should have been happy to have offered my humble hospitality to Mr. — what did you say his name was?"

"Ah, ah! I have not tell;—my goot friend—var goot fellow, Masther Rips—I am so bad at de English!—Ripsall. I have great regard for Ripsall."

I watched him closely during the progress of his lie; and, though it was clear I had no common cheat to deal with, still, either my manner abashed him, or something had put him off his guard. The attempt was so bare-faced, whatever might have been its purpose, that my impatience of his presence grew too manifest to be longer overlooked. He rose, thanked me for my politeness, and, as he retired, presented his card, on which was engraved—THE BARON VON HOFFMAN, EARL OF SIRONY.

CHAPTER XI.

THUS RUNS THE WORLD AWAY.

Chevaliers d'Industrie ubiquitous — “ Rude am I of speech” — A thief sees an officer in every bush — The Golden Calf—Indications of the fie-fie—“ May good digestion wait on appetite.

“La vie ne se révèle à nous-mêmes qu’avec le choc des occasions.”

BRUCKER.

“Time is the distance of moral life, the perspective of the mind: it is only now, seated in my easy chair at Crockey’s, or by my fireside in St. James’s Place, that groupings come out before my mind’s eye, and trifles combine themselves into events, which, when passing before me, were mere dots and lines, scratchings and daubings.”

Cecil, a Peer.

“Who can speak
The mingled passions that surprised his heart?”

THOMPSON.

CHAPTER XI.

However justly our soil and climate may be accused of scant fertility, and sluggishness of physical production, no country under the sun has been so prolific of those social ill-weeds that, as the proverb says, “grow apace.”

When Horace wrote the robustious hexameters that open the second satire of his First Book, he indited a catalogue suited *au pied de la lettre*, to distinguish the moral *fungi* that should overrun Great Britain in the fullness of time. France has done much in the way of *chevaliers d'industrie*; India boasts her sons of a *legerdemain* so perfect, that they can pick a man's back of his shirt; but a

concentration alone of all the ethereal subtilities of civilization, and the instructive dexterities of savage life, can form that "perfect monster," the English swindler.

Be it not supposed I mean that this most finished of all the disciples of Mercury is an indigenous plant of our earth; so far from it, the best specimens have been exotics. All I contend for is, that it nowhere attains the ideal of luxuriance, save in the rich loam of John Bull's forcing-house. As it is only here and there one meets with a man who desires to proclaim himself an ass by sound of trumpet, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred all that the cheat requires to secure impunity, is success. The more monstrous the means, too, the more triumphant the consequences, let the end be but attained.

The annals of credulity, probably, contain no other instance whose details exhibit the prodigality of success that crowned the early career of the Baron Von Hoffman. Fortune, to whose caprice the majority of the ingenious are so largely indebted, in his

case had nothing to do but to look on with amazement. Fully sensible that the more select the company admitted to an exhibition of sleight-of-hand, the more the chances are multiplied in favour of the showman, he eschewed commerce with mankind in the mass. To certain coteries, curious in lions, he accomplished an introduction, and with these he was ever a welcome guest. This was brought about, in the first instance, by a certain dashing general of cavalry, who subsequently became commander of the forces in Ireland, and whom our accomplished chevalier undoubtedly succeeded in "fooling to the top of *his bent*." The Baron was by no means diffident of allusion to his "friend," or the circumstances under which he first made that nobleman's acquaintance. These will throw some light upon the style of audience to whom he played on his first appearance, and, therefore, are worth a passing notice. As a dry relation, indeed, the story will hardly bear telling; but, as I cannot transfer the narrator's wild gestures and quaint

language to my page, I have no alternative but thus to communicate it.

“It was at Malta that I became known to my noble friend, General Lord C——,” so at least the substance of this narrative would say, “having touched there in my yacht, which I was trying, by a cruise in the Mediterranean, previous to a voyage and adventure that required no ordinary means and appliances.

“A finer vessel never floated than that craft; she was built for me at Bordeaux, entirely of the choicest Spanish mahogany, was equal in tonnage and appointments to a first-class frigate, and cost about sixty thousand pounds. C—— frequently lunched on board of her, for he took quite a fancy to my sandalwood cabin and curious Tokay: the latter presented to me by Esterhazy, from his hundred-year-old bin.

“As it may seem remarkable that a Hungarian nobleman should go to such expence for a pleasure-vessel, I will enter into the particulars, although it is most painful to me to recall them.

“During a visit to Vienna, I saw and admired a young Portuguese lady, the daughter and heiress of the wealthiest and most noble family in Estremadura; she was the guest of a relative, then on a mission to the Austrian court, and the fame of her beauty filled every *salon* in Germany.

“Admiration grew into a more tender sentiment; I loved the Lusian girl, and my passion was returned with a fervour, pure, but glowing, as her native skies. As we made no secret of our attachment, the rumour of it speedily reached Portugal. The policy of her house had, in childhood, affianced her to a noble of her own land. Refusal to ratify the contract caused her immediate removal from the banks of the Danube to a convent on the Tagus. A letter which she contrived to forward to me at Paris revealed the history of her sacerdotal imprisonment, and the danger and difficulty of any attempt to rescue her from it.

“These acted but as incitements, while they suggested the necessity for caution as

well as courage. I resolved that the means of flight should be as secret as secure. To this end the yacht was built, and manned with a crew whose law was my will. A Parisian chemist furnished me with a rope-ladder, so prepared that, being for an hour subjected to the action of the air, it became dust. This latter precaution I adopted, that even the fact of the captive's escape should be incapable of proof.

“ Thus prepared, I sought the Tagus, bore away the brightest flower that ever bloomed upon its shores, and sailed for climes where nature is an Eden, and life a summer-day.

“ I will not recall the ruin of all this promise, save to tell that, of the blithe company who set forth on that voyage, I alone remain. She, who was fairer than the daughters of this world, sleeps with the pearl and the coral, twin-sisters of her brow and lip ; she is gone to bliss ; he who remains, survives to living death !”

By the aid of a white cambric handkerchief, coal-black mustaches, and a jewelled hand, this story was wont to produce a vast

effect. He had half a dozen others to match; and these, well seasoned with high names, passed him into certain circles with prodigious *éclat*.

In London, however, his career as "Earl of Sirony" was brief. After a residence of little more than a year in England, he selected Dublin as the scene of his exploits, where, at the time, Lord C—— was commander of the forces. At his Lordship's levees, and her Ladyship's parties, the Baron was a star. Covered with embroidery, ribands, and orders, and accompanied by his suite, for two seasons he was the "observed of all observers" in the most aristocratic coteries of the Irish metropolis. From the court to the kennel was his final step. In the streets where, a few years before, he had ridden as a prince, he was seen shivering, in rags, a gaunt beggar, at the point of starvation. In the streets which he had once paraded with the most distinguished of their company, died the Baron Von Hoffman, for the lack of bread and shelter!

My arrangements for ceding the cottage to its new tenant were completed, and I only awaited the issue of a scheme that promised to supply funds necessary for the emigration, when a letter was left for me by a person who refused to give his name, which put an end to all else, save the immediate matter of its contents. It was anonymous, and announced that my father was on the point of leaving B—— for Oxford, to communicate to me a matter of great concern. The thief, says the proverb, sees an officer in every bush: I, as naturally, jumped at the conclusion, that the old gentleman had learned my position, and, using the Oxford trip as a *ruse* for his journey, was bound incontinently for Thames Ditton, then and there to burn the villa to the ground, and put its inmates to the sword.

To avert such a catastrophe as this, I wrote, on the instant, that I might be expected in Shropshire within a few hours after the receipt of my letter; and, having told Caroline that I was merely going to town, and should

return to dinner, I was off for London as fast as a thorough-bred hack could carry me: thence I despatched Maher, with orders to state, that a sudden summons called me to B—— for a few days; that I should return before the end of the week, without fail; and, at eight o'clock the same evening, I lit my cigar on the box of the "Wonder," at the door of the Peacock, at Islington.

It has been said that, when a man sees another cross the street, as he believes, for the purpose of knocking him down, and, in lieu of a thwack on the head, receives an invitation to dinner, the compliment becomes enhanced a hundred-fold. Upon a similar principle I regarded my reception at the home of my ancestors. When, instead of a face like a thunder-cloud, and a salute to correspond, I was welcomed with a tone, soft as the music of the spheres is said to be, and with a smile, sweet as those attributed to the seraphs (by parties in the habit of associating with them) — I say, when, utterly unable to account for myself or my

appearance, my respected sire (albeit, by nature, wily as a fox, and choleric as a gamecock) took me unto his bosom, "and no questions asked," it was as though the usher of the black rod had shown me from Pandemonium to Paradise.

It is not my custom to pry impertinently into the causes of good luck — the effect is enough for all my purposes. I, therefore, took the goods the gods gave, that is to say (dinner being discussed), a bottle of 1818 claret, and a slice of pineapple, without opening my mouth, save for the behoof of my palate.

There I was, for all my progenitor knew to the contrary, dropped from the firmament, treated as if he had transmitted to Oxford, some weeks before, a card of invitation, to "request the honour of my company at dinner" on such and such a day, and that the occasion had duly arrived. A seraphic feeling of filial love glowed within me! Memories of neglected duties, and slighted observances, rose like mocking fiends before my

troubled conscience! How base and vile had been my past life! how unworthy such a parent! It was surprising I did not fall at his feet, and make a clean breast of it!

"Hyde, my boy," said the unparalleled old gentleman, "here's a bumper to your return home; though, I suppose, I can hardly flatter myself it was affection for the governor procured him the gratification. Pockets to let, unfurnished, eh? Well, well, we were all young once, and went a little over discretion pace. That must be put right. Now answer me freely and honestly, with an assurance of my desire and ability to assist you; should you feel any disinclination to be put in possession of fifty thousand pounds forthwith?"

How perfect was his philosophy who pronounced that "merely we are Fate's tools!" There I was, my honour, my very life jeopardied, for the scurvy need of a few guineas, ready to swoon at an offer of immeasurable wealth! Libertine that I was — careless of personal consequences, and all the anxieties I might inflict on those connected with me—

still my heart was not hardened enough to contemplate the horrid conviction that struck upon it. Yet, could I doubt — did it admit of the possibility of question, that my father had indeed lost his senses ?

And how terrible was the expression of his madness ! Had he decaudated himself before my eyes, and stuck his dear old pigtail into his button-hole for a nosegay ; had I beheld him help himself from the water-bottle instead of the claret-jug—in short, perpetrating any act of ordinary insanity, there might have been a hope. But to hear him ask his son—me, Hyde Marston—to accept a delicate accommodation to the tune of fifty thousand pounds ! Oh ! it was too shocking !

“ Take your wine,” he continued, with a manner that would have imposed upon Willis or Munro ; “ attend to me, but don’t stop the bottle. I am not rich, my dear Hyde—my fortune is not enough for both of us ; in such a case, is it not a father’s duty to do for his son ? ”

The fruit was still on the table, and so were the dessert knives !

“ Now you'll want to go to Melton this winter: indeed it is my desire to see you make your *début* there. That cannot be done as it ought without ten hunters and a couple of hacks.”

I ventured to hint that it might be attempted with *six*, and a single hackney to begin with.

“ D——n your sneaking half-dozen!” he exclaimed—(here I wanted to peel an apple, and took possession of the blade that happened to be nearest his hand); “ you shall open in Leicestershire with half a score of the best nags England can produce; a couple of slapping teams for your road-work; and a cook from the *Fauxbourg St. Honoré*.”

(What a sample of paternal solicitude!—“ Oh, what a noble mind was here overthrown!”)

“ This is the style in which it becomes a son of mine to take the field; and thus shall it be brought about:—I have secured you a wife, with fifty thousand pounds in possession, and as many more in reversion.”

Sheridan is prone to scoff at matrimony, but he was a *roué* ;—Gay was a moral man, and yet he makes his hero surrender himself to the hangman, rather than receive a visit from the wife of his bosom. Will not some allowance, then, be made for the feelings with which *I* received this announcement ?

A stream of calm and holy moonlight poured through the open casement, as I entered the chamber of my childhood ; there was the pillow, hallowed by many a rosy dream, and slumber light ; experience had come, and what was the worth of the reality, compared with the vision ? It was not my fault that the base logic of instinct made Caroline represent the substance, and the immateriality of my purse the shadow of the proposition.

If we desire to see the human race exercising its noblest prerogative, we must seek it in the wilderness. Civilized man has ceased to be a free agent ; the will and the way unfettered are the proud privileges alone of the savage.

On the following morning, my father sent for me, and promptly unfolded his plans. The lady selected for the honour of my hand was the only daughter of General W——, one of his earliest friends. He had entered the army as a boy, and, having reaped a harvest of laurels and sugar-canes, even from the Bahamas to extremest Tobago, became a *millionaire* and a general of artillery. This fortunate son of Mars, being an Irishman, bore off a planter's daughter, who bore *him* a daughter (both matters of course). The latter was exported in her infancy to Ireland, to be reared by her uncle, a swain that fed his flocks in the rich pastures of the Golden Vale.

Such was the maiden destined for my arms; and, seeing that I had not the luck to be born an anthropophagus, but a Christian gentleman, who could not have given change for a silver groat, had his salvation depended upon it, I offered no objection to the arrangements. Indeed, under all the circumstances, had the proposal been that I should marry the

General, instead of his daughter, I don't well see how I could have refused.

By noon we were upon the Holyhead road, and, without further adventure, reached Dublin, and the residence of my father-in-law elect.

It was late when we arrived, and, after a hurried toilette, dinner was announced. Besides ourselves, there were but the host and his daughter present. A capital fellow the master of the mansion was, with the corporation of Falstaff, the nose of Bardolph, and the spirit of Momus ! I can't say I liked the lady so well ; perhaps I was prejudiced. A dish of pullets being opposite to me, I inquired whether I should have the pleasure of helping her ?

The reply was, " Thank'e, I *will* take a fowl."

This was startling. Something more alarming followed : a servant reported, that a person in the hall desired to see me instantly—it was Maher ! There he stood, travel-stained, with just breath enough to gasp out, " Miss

Caroline's bolted—she and the fellow with the nose ——”

I reeled as from the stroke of a poniard; but ruin was in discovery, and I tottered back to the dinner-table. I sank into my chair; the people around me were feasting—my soul died at the sight. One, bright, brilliant, and ethereal, was in my heart—at my elbow, a carnivorous Gorgon, with the polished bones of a pullet before her. With an effort I faltered out,—“You have not dined?”——when she, who was to be to me another Caroline, thus took up the reply:—“Well, then, upon my conscience, I'm hungry to-day, that's the truth: I'll trouble you for another fowl.”

CHAPTER XII.

IRELAND IN 1821.

“Our whirligig revels make all the blue devils creep out”—Nolo conjugari—Whig and Tory under the mahogany—The Road as it was, and may be now—More about the Curragh—The Turf Club—Olympics—Paphics.

“ To live at home,
And never roam;
To pass the day in sighing :
To wear sad looks,
Read stupid books,
And look half dead, or dying :
Not shew your face,
Nor join the chase,
But dwell a hermit always—
Ah, Charley dear!
To me it's clear
You're not the man for Galway!”

Charles O'Malley.

“ Round him much embryo, much abortion lay,

* * * * *

Nonsense precipitate, like running lead
That slipp'd through cracks and zigzags of the dead;
All that or Folly—Frenzy could beget.”

DUNCIAD.

CHAPTER XII.

Shall I ever forget my first impressions of Ireland and the Irish? We sail from London to Otaheite, and, reaching the paradise of the Pacific, observe that the costume and customs differ from those we left behind. Tatooing does duty for tailoring, and six inches of linen for as many yards of broadcloth. But the hempen convenience is a strip of sober, reasonable stuff, content to be devoted to one part of the person, and there to discharge the office for which it is intended. Step from a steamer to the pier of Kingstown, or St. George's Quay, and mark the habits and manners of the natives.

That form, buttoned up to the throat, in

what was once a great coat, surmounted by an apology for a hat, belongs to one of the fair sex, who, peradventure, dealeth in “her-rings and live cod;” and that young gentleman at her side is the first-born of her love, who, with his arms stuck through the legs of his father’s corduroys, trusts it may be thought he wears a jacket, and, nobly independent, leaves the residue of his symmetry as it pleased Providence to turn it out.

But what of that? Fun is “the charter of the land;” and is not a light heart a light heart, whether it beat beneath a waistcoat of Persian velvet, or the tattered sackcloth that stands for a shirt?

I take my green islander, and administer to him a drop of that elixir which transforms his rags to robes, and his mud-cabin to a marble palace. Hark! from out a bag of sorely defiled leather one squeezeth notes to which the dying remonstrances of the tenant of the sty are as the music of the spheres. The son of Erin drinketh in the minstrelsy. Little careth he for the “concord of sweet

sounds." His end and aim are fun—fun breathed in Lydian measures, or blasted from the throat of a jungle tiger. Behold! his internal spirit cutteth a caper; above his streaming locks waveth the sprig of shillelagh, and he poureth forth a strain—

“Och! piper, your music so sweetly comes over me,
Naked I'll wander wherever it blows,
And if my father should wish to discover me,
Sure it won't be by describing my clothes.”

Some tourist has said (or, if he didn't, he might have said) that a scarlet coat and an English accent are the St. Peter's keys of Irish society. At the period I write of, the most eminent lion at the viceregal parties was a Lieutenant of the —— regiment, whose father retailed the intestines of animals, in the state known as tripe, at the corner of Goodge Street, Tottenham Court Road.

This allusion to esculents warns me to resume the thread of my story. I parted from the reader at a moment when the loss of one mistress had swallowed up all my hopes, and

the attainment of another seemed to make it by no means improbable that I should share the fate of my prospects. The existence of these memoirs is, however, evidence of my escape, and relieves the sympathetic of their anxieties. If everybody selected the most remarkable moral or natural curiosity of which he or she had experience, and bequeathed the record to posterity, what a library it would furnish! My legacy would, unquestionably, be a gastronomic sketch of Euphemia W——.

An ingenious calculator has recently ascertained that, on an average, each member of society, at the age of sixty, has disposed of thirty tons of animal food. Had he adopted, as his *datum*, the style of feeding common to a young lady who made her third course off a couple of roast fowls, I wonder what his estimate would have been!

I mated not with the daughter of Erin. The elder Marston, albeit choleric, as we have seen him, and obstinate as a pig or a priest, was every inch a gentleman, and, withal, not

divested of bowels, as regarded his son. He was, moreover, thoroughly English—abating no jot of the prejudice that John Bull claims as his privilege. Perhaps the money-bags might have induced him to tolerate, as a daughter-in-law, a demoiselle who, in the matter of victuals, would have astonished a company of French falconers. But her parts of speech, cacologies “barbarous and unnatural,” were beyond the philosophy of any man who first saw the light east of St. George’s Channel.

To convey a general idea of the tone and quality of her voice; when she spoke, as Byron says, you would have imagined “an ass was practising recitative”—an Irish donkey, with a brogue rank and remorseless enough to burst the walls of a cellar.

Parties, also, at that time, ran very high: in Dublin, Orangemen flavoured their claret with a wholesale consignment of the Church of Rome to the fire that never quencheth; while, in the provinces, Ribbonmen returned the compliment, by cutting the tails off the

enemy's black cattle, and encompassing their chattels in flames, that generally did as much as was required of them, before they were extinguished.

Now my father was a high-churchman (politically)—an uncompromising Tory of the George the Third school, and the General an ultra-unlimited-liberal Whig. In reference to our particular party, the social horizon became overcast on the third or fourth day after we joined it. The storm soon burst. Whether “the Glorious Memory,” or the “Veto,” brought about the crisis, I do not now remember, but it did come, with a vengeance; and, waving details, the next morning saw the two Saxons breakfasting together at Morrison's, in Dawson Street.

“Hyde,” said the elder, “give me another kidney:—that villanous, pot-bellied nigger-driver! Nothing should prevent my reporting his treason to the Horse Guards, but that I know he'll come to be hanged. He'll bring himself to the gallows, and save honest people the trouble. It was a mercy the old

rascal's roof didn't fall before we were clear of it."

Such was the *coup de grâce* to my hymeneals, and, with escape from pressing and instant peril, came the hour of reflection.

Heaven knows, it brought but little pleasant to ponder on. I had found life no summer sea, as far as my voyage had already extended, and the prospect for its progress was anything but hopeful. But I was not *alone*—the most fearful of all human positions: for sorrow and shame, for pain and penury, there is the balm of sympathy; in the grave, man is but parted from his grosser self;—but solitude is the tomb of the soul.

Hastiness and instability, frequently characteristics of the most eminent philosophers, statesmen, and soldiers, are impulses that prompt them to adopt measures and conclusions which instinct seizes on as the most fitting and convenient. Without a fraction of philosophy in his composition, my father always jumped at his best conclusions. As we strolled out after breakfast, he proceeded

to lay before me a scheme for my future arrangements, which, I am satisfied, suggested itself to him as he detailed it.

My continuance at Oxford was left an open question, to be settled on my return home—an event he desired should be postponed for a month or two. That space I was to occupy in Ireland, as it might best please me, either in the metropolis, or by a series of country visits: the part I was to play in life would be selected for me when next we met.

Had Plato or Socrates been employed to devise a plan suited to the circumstances of the case, they could not have contrived a better. Quiet, rarely a synonyme with happiness till we have passed our grand climatic, to one at my age, and in my position, was a thing to fly from like a pestilence.

Gratefully, therefore, did I enter into the proposal, and accept the *congé d'elire*; and, having put my sire into the Holyhead packet, and his letter of credit on Latouche into my pocket, behold me, like our first parents, casting about, in no small solicitude “where to choose.”

June drew towards a close, and Dublin was anything but pleasant head-quarters. It was a piece of especial good luck, therefore, that threw into my way, in the course of the evening, the son of an Irish archbishop—a member of my college at Oxford, who was about to pay a flying visit to the Curragh Summer Meeting, which commenced on the following morning. We at once concluded to pass a day there together, and thence to make our passage into Meath, whither his homeward route would lead him; my intention being to penetrate through Longford, into Leitrim and Donegal.

How many people have laughed at the pictures of posting in Ireland, drawn by tourists; yet, how little have they imagined that nothing written, or probably to be written, ever conveyed, or will convey, a true idea of it! Burlesque out of its wits, or caricature gone distracted, would be styles infinitely too tame and common-place for the attempt.

The first moiety of our descent was accomplished “*comme il plaisait à dieu* ;” that is to

say, at the imminent hazard of our lives.—the second, from Naas to the Curragh, as a similar distance, had scarcely been before performed by a post-chaise.

Our team consisted of a pair of pestilent-looking skeletons, without blinkers, their eyes scanning along their cruppers—every glance eloquent of dislocations and broken bones. My friend had a London tiger with him (being desirous of introducing the species into Galway), who occupied the near side of the driver's rail. The first attempt at a move ejected him, in a fashion that could not have been surpassed by any of the race, a single spring conveying him to the roof.

The demonstration that gave the English groom notice to quit had quite a contrary effect on the Irish postboy. It knocked his hat off, indeed, and bestowed a compliment on one of his shins, that would have demolished a milestone; but use is second nature. With one hand he gathered up the pieces of ragged ropes that acted as reins, and, with the other, fell to work as if thrashing in a

barn. Where our anatomies contrived to carry the life and devilment that enabled them to squeal as they squealed, and kick as they kicked, would have puzzled a more able zoologist than I was. But there was little opportunity allowed for speculation of that sort, or any other.

The dispute was settled by the remnant of a bay mare, that played off-sider, planting her heels in the pit of coachee's stomach, who, with a yell of despair, and a crash of the rail whereon he was perched, disappeared, as if blown out of a mortar.

“Terry's kilt!” soliloquized a fellow, who had been supporting himself against the gable of a house, to enjoy the fun; “be the hole o' me coat, they've tuck the number of his mess at last betuxt them!”

By this time, all the idle and disorderly of the town (nine-tenths of its population) began to assemble around us; but the face of affairs had changed. As there was no longer any one to force the steeds to the road, of course there was nothing to be accomplished by stay-

ing where they were, and to it they went, with a will. First was performed a plunge, which, breaking the pole off in the futchells, and at the hook, at once relieved them of that encumbrance ; and, as the scene of action was the summit of a hill, the chaise thereupon set off of its own accord.

It has often occurred to me, that if a defunct old coach-horse were propped up “at wheel,” and his pole-chain left so long that, when the carriage was put into motion, the splinter-bar should come in contact with his hocks, he would incontinently set off at a gallop. Of all instruments of torture, there is not one that has fears for an old “machiner” equal to those of a splinter-bar. Probably the horror of finding himself overtaken, at last, by a phantom, from which he has been running all his life, may account for it. At all events, in our case, the effect was electrical. No sooner did our “pair” feel the application of the timber to their extremities, than they set off as if suddenly endued with a second colthood ; but the declivity was steep,

and the principle of *gravity* (one little familiar to anything Irish), was too many for them. The consequence was, that before the descent was achieved, the chaise had outran the horses, and, with a *summerset*, concluded its performance in a ditch. There we lay, till Terry and a *posse comitatus* arrived, picked us up, and we reached the course just as the racing commenced.

There is no country on earth where sporting forms so popular a subject of conversation as Ireland—few where it is less artistically carried into effect. As I can have no purpose of intentional offence by this observation, I trust none will be taken. It is said in an honest desire to bring about better things—where the will would be father to the result. The following remarks, though made principally with reference to a period of twenty years ago, apply, I fear, almost equally to the present day.

Racing, from the management of the training stable, to the end of its design—the winning-post—was in a most defective state.

Indeed, my experience of Irish horses, whether on the turf, in the field, or elsewhere, does not enable me to call to mind one out of fifty that exhibited the condition which distinguishes the studs of this country. I never saw one of their racers brought to the post "up to the mark," as we say; and the principle on which they were ridden was little better than that practised in Italy, where they are "turned loose." Holding a horse together—waiting—lying with the field—collaring—all the fine points of race-riding, are either unknown, or disregarded; and he who comes away at score, and finishes "upon the whip," is the boy for an Irish race.

When the robbery was practised at the Curragh, six years since, by a member for the county of Kildare, who ran, and won with, an English three-year-old, Becassine, as an Irish two-year-old, Caroline, I took occasion to see Mr. Montgomery, the keeper of the match-book, and secretary to the Irish Turf Club, upon the matter. In the course of conversation, I learned from him that, in naming for

stakes, nothing more was necessary than that the sire and dam should be stated ; so that the substitution of life nominations for those that might die before the day of running, or, good for bad, after they were tried, would, as Liston expressed it, be “quite hop-tional.”

I shall have to speak probably of the fox-hunting and other field sports of Ireland, but we are now on the Curragh, and, through the politeness of Mr. Kirwan, a member of the Turf Club, introduced into the stand. Nothing could be more striking to an English eye, or more delicious to the traveller, arrived from a dusty limestone highway, than the prospect afforded from it. Though it was midsummer, intensely hot, and no rain had fallen for weeks, the turf was as bright and brilliant as the glow of an emerald.

But where were the people ? Was I in a land proverbial for its love of pleasure, and could such a scene muster but a few dozens of the gentle, and a few hundred shillelaghs ? Our yellow inconvenience was the only equi-

page to be seen—and the cavaliers consisted almost exclusively of stalwart yeomen, mounted upon steeds that carried their tails precisely as Providence had *not* ordained they should be borne; the riders buttoned up to the nose in ponderous great coats of blue frieze, the thermometer being about 90° in the shade.

Still, if the goddess whose temple was at Ephesus had cause to be dissatisfied, so had not the divinity whose shrine was at Paphos. The stand was chiefly occupied by young ladies from Dublin and the vicinity of the course, and by a body of heavy dragoons from headquarters at Newbridge, whose brass band and kettle-drums, in an adjoining chamber, appeared bent on accomplishing the feat performed at Jericho.

I have seen tolerable sweethearting in my time, but never anything like that. Imagine some scores of sweet little ears, graceful and pearly as the shells in which Peris are cradled, lost in gloomy furrows of moustaches. Imagine “cheeks that would shame the morning’s break” blushing “deeper and deeper still,”

while past all conceiving are the vows of fire that dye them to crimson. Fancy this if you may, and you will have before you an outline of the mask of *Mars et Venus*, as enacted on this occasion at the Curragh of Kildare.

CHAPTER XIII.

IRELAND IN 1821—*continued.*

Irish champain—Yankee Doodle Paradise—Hibernian fox-hunting—Something *àpropos* of geese—The game laws—Rural matters in general, and roads in particular—Pat Hart's jaunting car—Out quarters—Hibernian prudery—A catastrophe.

“ Och! may life forsake me, and the divil take me
If ever I desart the fair;
So vain’s yer praching, likewise yer taching,
Bright eyes and kissing is my only care.”

From the Greek of MIMNERMUS.

“Cantare, potare, amare, pugnare præcepta Sociorum
nostrorum sunt.”

“ Is man no more than this? Consider him well: Thou
owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no
wool, the cat no perfume. Ha! here’s three of us are
sophisticated. Thou art the thing itself; unaccommodated
man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as
thou art.”

King Lear.

CHAPTER XIII.

The skirmishing, however, was not exclusively carried on by the cavalry, neither did all the booty carried off fall to their share. But mine must not be the pen to indite the bulletin. All that it is permitted me to divulge is, that, on re-entering our chaise (having, at Oxford, heard T—— make comparison between the manners of Irish and English maidens, by no means to the advantage of the latter), I made no effort to hide from him certain *spolia opima* won in the Grand Stand, consisting of a torquoise *vinaigrette*, and the sweetest little Limerick glove that ever cased alabaster.

The racing was very bad ; I cannot call to

mind particulars, but worse it could not have been. The whole thing, to borrow a phrase from the theatrical vocabulary, was miserably "mounted," and I was not sorry when we were fairly on our road for Kinnegad, where my companion and I were to dine and separate.

Our route lay through the district thus noticed in the journal of an American, who made the tour of Leinster : " I cannot adequately express my admiration of this part of Ireland. One may here travel from morning till night without meeting a piece of growing timber large enough to make a skewer."

It certainly looked very like fox-hunting, as far as regarded the hunter ; but, for the animal chased, appearances were anything but flattering. The surface, turf that has not felt the plough for centuries, must carry a burning scent, and there is not a vestige of cover to hide a fox, above ground. What a return of the season's sport would the Belvoir, the Quorn, or the Burton have rendered, with a brace of foxes each hunting day, and such a country to catch them in ?

It was late when we reached our destination, awfully hungry, and somewhat weary to boot. The hotel was a long thatched building, coloured with yellow ochre, like a barn in its holiday attire. Our arrival created no sensation; we were permitted to emerge from our leathern incommodity, and enter without any impertinent interference. No bowing host, no spruce, obsequious waiters were there to anticipate the guest's wishes. Having made our way into an apartment, which, from the odour of whisky and tobacco, promised to be a parlour, I applied myself lustily to the bell-rope. As this was a piece of faded scarlet ribbon (evidently invalided from the landlady's Sunday cap), appended to a nail in the cornice, there was not much likely to come of that, so we lifted up our voices and cried aloud. The summons was presently responded to by a strapping, carrotty wench, bare-headed, bare-shouldered, bare-legged, and bare-footed.

I have not been at Timbuctoo, nor on visiting terms with the natives of Australia; therefore I am not competent to give an opinion

about the nakedness of *foreign* savages ; but of all the nations and peoples of which I have had experience, certainly the Irish are the least encumbered with clothes.

The lady who attended our bidding was, as I have premised, none of your Sylphides, but a fine sample of the species locally designated—"Mullingar Heifers," from their proneness to run to beef, and the circumstance of wearing the thickest parts of their legs downwards, like claret decanters.

Our first care was food. "Give us to eat," said I, "anything you have in the house, or every thing, only despatch—for we're not to be trifled with. What is there in the larder?—a bullock or two—a flock of turkeys, or any little thing of that kind?"

"Not an hour since, Easthur, but there was mate enough in the house to feed a faction, till this unlucky day itself," replied the Pythoness ; "but sure there's an elegant goose ready for the spit anyhow, and may be yees could manage it, stuffed with onions and pratees."

“Amen,” rejoined T——, (probably because his sire wore the archi-episcopal mitre.) “So be it—let us see our rooms, and then parade the classic fowl.”

While the damsel retired to learn the places appointed for our dormitories, we occupied our leisure as the practice is with persons similarly situated. T—— commenced a sketch of our attendant, wherein the ancles were three times the circumference of the waist; and I began diligently to cultivate the “posies,” whereof a goodly crop decorated the walls and window-shutters. The first I succeeded in deciphering was to this effect:—

“I’ve been to Naas—a horrid place—
Kildare—uncommon bad—
But d—— me if I ever met
The like of Kinnegad.”

This satisfied my taste for the Muses for the remainder of the day.

The chamber selected for me was a grim closet, containing a “stump” bedstead, a stone pitcher, without snout or handle, and a piece

of broken crockery intended to represent a bason.

In such a state of things, what a blessing it was to hear preparations for a row under my window ! Open went the casement ; beneath it lay a yard to which the lumber-room in Noah's ark must have been the ideal of order and neatness. At a door, that seemed to belong to the kitchen, stood a mountain of a woman, with the face of a fury, and a monstrous ladle in her hand, and, opposite to her (but out of reach of the ladle), a singular looking muscular dwarf, whose appearance was that of one who had recently been engaged in a struggle for his life. He was about three feet high, and without garment of any description, except a pair of breeches that would have accommodated a giant. These were made fast round his neck ; the waistband under the arm-pits, and the knees turned upwards, to prevent their covering his toes.

Both were holding forth, but the voice of the ladle-bearer prevailed like a trumpet in a chorus.

“Tare and ages, is it empty-handed ye’re standing there, ye basthoon of the world? Where’s the burd, ye pup of blazes? Mother of Moses, here’s a nice gentleman for a tay party, that can’t hold a dawny fowl in his fisht!”

“Thry him yerself, Mistress O’Shannahan,” roared the dwarf, at the peril of his lungs:—
“thry him yerself, ma’am. Oh! to be sure, it’s the asiest thing in life to catch an old lawyer iv a gander, wid as many thricks in his head as a Quarter Sessions, and him as slippery as an eel in a running sthrame.”

“Arrah, thin! if ye can’t keep a houlth of him,” rejoined the dame, “why don’t you smash him wid the beatle.¹ The divil’s luck to yer manners, to thrate a brute baste with politeness, and keep a lady waiting to stuff him with a praty pudding.”

The dwarf disappeared upon the hint—there was a short silence—the heavy fall of a

¹ A beatle is an instrument made like our cricket-bat, used, in Ireland and Scotland, for washing clothes.

club sounded anon ; then followed the wild despairing qua-a-a-k

“Of some strong *gander* in his agony ;”

and all was again still. The fastidious in gastronomy will probably regard with disrelish this catastrophe of our gander.

I do not profess much skill in the science, but this I know, that I disposed of a couple of his legs, who had “as many thricks in his head as a Quarter Sessions,” and found the limbs repose as tranquilly in their premature mausoleum as such things generally do.

On the following morning my companion left me, his route lying beyond the Shannon, which he was to cross at Athlone. My course tending north-west, soon after noon I ascended the box of the Longford coach, as the best means of compassing a portion of my journey.

While I loitered about, consuming a cigar, and the time that intervened between breakfast and the arrival of my conveyance, I fell into company with another idle fellow, also lounging in the precincts of the inn, and, like

myself, doing battle with the enemy. From him I learned some pleasant particulars of the "driver," into whose hands I was to entrust my safe conduct.

"Misther Ryan," said my informant, "is intirely oncommon in respect of licker: bad luck to the bit, but he'll carry as much under his waikit as would dhrown many a one who purtinds to dhrink. It was ounly last week that he dined wid the officers quartered at Longford, and, after seeing them one by one dhrop under the table, he warmed the wine that was in him wid two-and-thirty tumblers of punch, and then walked home comfortable on his hands and knees."

With what a lavish prodigality has nature scattered her riches among the golden valleys that spread, in matchless luxuriance, over every district of this country! Yet here, where tree and shrub revel in beauty and fragrance—where the soft western shower sheds verdure on the hills, and clothes the teeming plains with primrose and violet—here is man to be seen in a state of moral and social

debasement, without parallel in the civilized world !

Such reflections are out of place here ; but I cannot help them. My blood boils as I recal the condition in which I have looked upon my fellow-creature in that unhappy land. Ireland ! Ireland ! think upon what your sons *might be*, and what they *are* ! . .

Instead of keeping the high road from Dublin to Sligo, and then taking the line of coast for Donegal, whither I was bound, I turned off at Longford for Granard, with the design of making my passage through the wild mountain ranges of Leitrim and Cavan. A more desolate region can hardly be conceived. I stood upon the battle-field, where the latest effort was made to plant the lily of France in the land of the shamrock, and, far as eye could reach, all was one wilderness of moor and mountain. Neither tree nor habitation fit for the abode of man was to be seen ; and when, from some burrow, behind a ditch, a human being did appear, it was in a guise that was a disgrace to a Christian community.

The district was very populous—indeed, so is the whole of Leitrim—and yet I was assured that, until within the five or six years preceding, there was not a bookseller's shop in the entire county. Wild and savage as the scene was, one of the marks of civilization had found its way there; the game was preserved with a rigour unknown to the most despotic of our *battue* promoters. It consisted solely of grouse and hares; but these, particularly the latter, swarmed in prodigious multitudes.

The “great man” for whose pleasure this care was undergone was Viscount Forbes, heir to the Earl of Granard, both, father and son, since gathered to their ancestors. Our Viscount, like little Spado in the play, though of minor physical pretensions, was a leviathan in soul; and, as regarded beasts and birds of ventry, one whose system was a pure despotism. I had a notable sample of this when near to the mountain hamlet of Drumlish. My terrier had scampered on before the chaise, and returned with his tail between his legs, bristles erect, and similar evidences of something un-

toward in the wind. Half a mile further on, we overtook a strapping fellow, with a gun on his shoulder, who, *sans ceremonie*, thus accosted me ;—

“ You must keep your dog up, or you’ll have him shot : my directions are to destroy all dogs found upon these roads, unless they are tied up.”

“ Indeed !” said I. “ And pray, friend, who may you happen to be, and whence do your truculent orders issue ?”

“ I’m James Macdermot, keeper to Lord Forbes, and those are his lordship’s instructions.”

I was weak enough to speak my sentiments thereon to Mr. Macdermot, who, very probably, as a commentary, gave *coup de fusil* to the first unlucky cur that fell in his path.

As everything in Ireland is attributed, by one party or other, to political design, it may be that, to serve some purpose of church or state, the rural roads were suffered to be in the condition in which I found them. At all events, if the object were to interdict internal

communication, human ingenuity could not have hit upon a plan so adapted to the end as that upon which the by-ways were supposed to be constructed and repaired; which was in this wise:—A landed proprietor, having certain dissolute tenants in heavy arrear of rent, causes it to be discovered that the means of passage from one particular point on his estate to another would be a great public convenience; forthwith, a “presentment” is made at the assizes, and, as each grand juror supports the jobs of the whole (that his own little affairs may be treated with similar courtesy), the question passes “*nem. con.*” Now, as the formation of the road is left to the conscience of “certain dissolute parties” as aforesaid, its construction at all is problematical; that it is of the worst possible description is matter of course. This is no affair, however, of the landed proprietor; his object being to get an affidavit that the work is done and completed; and in that he is not disappointed. The affidavit, backed by the overseer (the “driver,” or bailiff of the

estate), is laid before the grand inquest, and an order for the amount duly issues. This the landlord presents to his friend, the treasurer of the county, who pays it in cash, or by a bill at six months (for the treasurer, being a great dealer in cattle, turns the county money to account at the spring fairs); and such is the history of Irish *ways* and means.

The Granard postboy made but one stage of the six or seven and twenty Irish miles to Mohill, where chaises were among the things that were not; “but sure Paddy Hart had an elegant jaunting-car, would take my honour brave and soon to Drumshambo.” From the latter place they contrived to transport me to Drumkerin, a sort of Hottentot kraal, where I was obliged to heave-to for provisions. There, in a wretched hovel, the solitary house of entertainment, I discovered a lieutenant of the line, and his pretty young English wife, who told me mine was the first form, in an entire suit of clothes (barring their own rank and file), they had seen for fifteen months. The Hibernian received me with his

country's cordiality : the poor girl's eyes filled at the first sound of my voice ; and, as the accents of her father-land continued to fall upon her ear, I verily believe she had fallen upon the speaker's neck, but for the presence of *monsieur le mari*.

As it was still some dozen miles to Manor Hamilton, where I purposed passing the night, I took a more abrupt farewell of the exiles than I could have wished. He was a frank, spirited fellow ; not overburdened with brains, but with just enough (considering the casket that contained them was surmounted by a plume of feathers) to turn the head of a girl of sixteen. I wonder if it was the purple sunset that filled me with such tender musings as I journeyed towards Manor Hamilton ?

A few miles inland from the point where the counties of Donegal and Leitrim meet on the shore of the Atlantic, is Loch Melville, on the banks of which stood the seat of the friend whose invitation had led me so far west. The national "hundred thousand welcomes" hailed me ere the threshold was passed.

“ Mr. Marston,” said the lady of the mansion, “ you must lose no time at your toilette—we dine in half an hour—all the world and his wife are to be here in the evening.”

Who talks of Irish prudery? Here, by the side of a solitary lake, in the wilds of Connaught, I witnessed as much done in sighs, glances, whispers, and the like, at one ball, as would have stocked May Fair for a season. “ *Le brave parmi les braves*,” in that Paphian siege, was the young and handsome Captain C——, whose brother long held a distinguished position in the household of a royal duchess.

On the following morning, as I strolled by the lake, he overtook me, rod in hand; his spirits, if possible, more brilliant than on the preceding night.

“ I’m for an onslaught against the gillaroo trout,” said he; “ splendid fellows, as long as one’s leg, and with gizzards as big as one’s hat; but they’re plaguy shy. By Jove, how lucky! here’s a boat.”

Now this boat, bleached on the shore of

the lake by twenty summer suns, was as much suited for navigation as a sieve. But remonstrance was vain.

“ There’s no fear,” said he, launching, and pushing off with the branch of a tree ; “ you’ll see what sport I shall have.”

His eye beamed wildly—he was soon some distance from the shore—I watched him intently—when, quick as thought, his frail bark disappeared, and the waters closed over the young soldier for ever !

CHAPTER XIV.

IRELAND IN 1821 — *concluded.*

“ It’s a folly to fret ” — A Moore-ish girl — A feast that knows no end — Loch Melville woodcocks — Ballyshannon Falls, where “ the trout and salmon do play backgammon ” — How to slip through an act of Parliament — An Irish Crichton — Two of a trade can never agree — A watering-place and race — The metropolis once more — The royal visit, but not the royal visitor.

“ If noble princes, from foreign places,
Should chance to visit the Irish shore,
Oh! sure it's there that they would be feasted,
As often heroes have been before.”

Ballad of Sweet Castle Hyde.

“ ——— folle per lui
Tutto il mondo si fa. Perisca Amore,
E saggio ognun sarà.”

Metastasio.

“ Oh! place, oh! form;
How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit,
Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls
To thy false seeming!”

Measure for Measure.

CHAPTER XIV.

Such an event, it will easily be supposed, threw gloom and melancholy over a party, whose first scene of pleasure was visited by so awful a catastrophe. But the folly of fretting is an axiom, in support of which the practice of every man, woman, and child, from the Giant's Causeway to the Old Head of Kinsale, might be quoted as examples.

By degrees the clouds that lowered upon our company cleared away; and though I am satisfied all felt in a manner creditable to their humanities, they presently ceased to exhibit any palpable evidences of grief.

Truly, as beautifully, has Gray poured forth his melodious lament, that many a flower is

born to bloom unseen—unseen, save through the senseless film, the caitiff cataract of a gaping clown, and lavishing a treasury of loveliness on a crew of savages, in bitter satire denominated “country gentlemen.”

If ever there were

“Cheeks that would shame the morning’s break,
And lips that might for redness make
Roses look pale beside them,”

they were those that gave magic to the smiles of Martha C——ne. Her eyes—I will say nothing about her eyes—neither of her form (moulded by the Loves, and moved by the Graces); nor of those glorious raven tresses, which, while they shaded, added deeper charms to the alabaster paradise whereon they reposed.

I hold my peace about these, lest some malevolent reader—all authors are exposed to the hazard of misinterpretation—might suppose that they had more interest for me than I was entitled to take in them, as a philosopher of Nature. We danced together, and I felt, as she floated through the mazes of the

quadrille, that Camilla was, of necessity, no being of fable; we waltzed together, and I felt—but I had rather not state what I felt when we waltzed together.

There is one peculiarity attending Irish society in general, and country parties in particular; namely, that while one feast, or *fête*, is under discussion, another is being arranged. From morning till night, and from night till morning, we did nothing but junket: how we bore it was a miracle. Girls, as ethereal as sylphides, did more hard labour than would have turned a parish of ploughmen to dust; while men and youths impersonated perpetual motion, whereof the medium of action was animal spirits—and whisky.

The scene of all this festivity was as sylvan a spot as can be imagined. The house, a villa on a large scale, was replete with a fair share of comfort, and abounded in the appliances of hospitality. It was situated on a lawn of resplendent green, washed by the bright waters of Loch Melville, while behind, and on either side, spread magnificent woods of oak.

In these, at the beginning of winter, owing to their proximity to the Atlantic, muster flocks of woodcocks, of which we have no examples in England. My host told me (without putting any emphasis on the achievement) that the last day he was out, in three hours, he bagged two-and-twenty couples to his own gun.

The surrounding mountains of Donegal, Cavan, and Leitrim, were populous with grouse, and, happily for me—seeing it was as yet but July—the waters were by no means without tenants. The lake in front of the house was well supplied with the gillaroo trout, the taste for which cost poor C—— his life ; and Loch Erne, but a few miles distant, offered the best salmon-fishing in Ireland. This magnificent sheet of water is dotted with fairy islets, laid out by the hand of Nature for feastings and flirtings *al fresco* ; and, if the general practice might be estimated by the example which we furnished, their arrangements had not been made in vain.

Every fisherman has heard of the salmon leap at the falls of Ballyshannon, where the

waters of the Erne throw themselves into the Atlantic. The fish are taken with the fly in the still stream, above the falls; and there, at a lovely little retreat, called Laputa, I spent some of the pleasantest hours associated with my reminiscences of the angle. The great fishery, where the salmon are netted in the weirs, is below the falls, and, at the period I write of, was farmed by one Dr. Sheill, who *cured* both fish and flesh, and scorned not to put his hand to anything that turned the penny.

The winter of 1820-1 had been unusually mild in the west of Ireland, and when spring should bring the luscious fish to the doctor's nets, it became manifest there would be no means of preserving them for transportation to the great markets. Our doctor was no sooner aware of this, than he chartered a vessel of some two or three hundred tons, and straightway despatched it to the North Seas. The bark duly returned, after as many icebergs had been captured as it could conveniently stow away, but the collector of customs

would not permit the freight to be landed until the duty was paid. Now, no cargo of the kind had ever before entered the port, and, as the Ballyshannon tariff contained no *sliding scale*, reference was made to the Commissioners of Customs in Dublin, and those functionaries, being in doubt, again referred the question to the authorities in London.

In this state the affair remained, when, one broiling July day, I was introduced to the doctor, who stood upon the quay while his irreparable chattels were pouring through the scuttles of a brig moored alongside.

Drops of agony stood upon his forehead ; tears were in his eyes ; poor fellow, he was melted, and so was his ice ! At the end of a month, when the merchandize had

“ Thawed and resolved itself into a dew,”

instructions were received that it might be “ landed ;” it had already *watered* itself.

During these rambles, our party was frequently joined by a remarkably handsome *roué*-looking personage, with coal-black moustaches, and eyes as bright and mischievous as

the tiger's. He was a lieutenant on half-pay of the 10th Hussars; rode ruthlessly; would have gone down Niagara with Scott, or up the Jungfrau for a morning lounge. He shot, fished, swam, and skated, better than any other man in the province; in short, he was a rural Crichton: second to none, save in a duel, in which he would be second to any one.

His name was A——, or rather “Kit” A——, for the prenomen was never omitted: the *enfant cheri* of his neighbourhood, and probably as finished a specimen of the wild Irishman of condition as these degenerate times have produced. Although generally courteous, with a joke for all people and all occasions, he affected my society more than that of any individual of the company, and seemed solicitous of detaching me from all others, and engrossing me to himself. His horses were at my service; his escort, when I felt inclined to angle; and his suggestions, in every case where his local knowledge or experience promised in any way to forward my objects.

I was no churl to baulk or reject kindness ; so I rode his stud, every individual of it, and we did not spare them. If there was a wall stiffer at one spot than another, or a drain wider or worse at taking off in one place than another, over these “ Kit ” shewed the way, and I, as in politeness bound, followed him. Trout we compassed by scaling precipices and descending into gullies of mountain streams, where the foot of man had never before ventured ; and, finally, he proposed that we should assist ourselves to a sample of young eagles, by robbing a nest in the face of a cliff, about as accessible as the balcony of the monument from the footpath on Fish Street Hill.

Now, eager as I was for adventure, and facile of persuasion, this latter proposition “ brought me up,” as the sailors say, “ all standing ; ” so, over our wine in the evening, I opened my mind on the subject to my host.

“ Not a bad sort of fellow in the main that friend of yours with the moustaches,” said I, “ but somewhat too much disposed to vice in general, and to break my neck in particular.

I have come to the conclusion that his desire is to bring me to a violent end."

"There cannot be a doubt of it," replied my entertainer, helping himself, and requesting me to pass the decanters: "he has had his eye on your attentions to Martha C——ne, and has never made a secret of his determination to put an end to any man that might cross him in that quarter. Everybody here, as well as myself, was aware that he had marked you out, from the night of your arrival."

I felt, for an instant, the sensation one experiences in passing quickly from a warm and cheerful room into the dark, damp cold of a winter's night. It lasted, however, *but* a moment; so, taking up the spirit of the society into which I was thrown, I continued—

"Well, as there is no mystery between us, I may as well declare to you *my* intentions with respect to him. I have come to a resolution to drown Lieutenant A—— in the course of this week or the next, as the state of the tide may make it most convenient.

I'll trouble you for a few of those strawberries."

Preparations had been for some time in progress for a public breakfast at the village of Bundoran, a pretty little watering-place on the adjacent coast. The day was very propitious ; and as our party descended from the carriage at the door of the hotel, there, lounging on the steps, stood A——, to be gratified by the sight of his mistress supporting herself on my arm, to ascend them. He bowed—we entered—and I presently returned and joined him.

" Awfully warm," said I, " hot enough to grill one ; what say you to a bath before we begin business ? the tide serves admirably."

" With all my heart," was the answer, " a capital move ;" and we departed in friendly community towards the shore.

The broad waters of the Atlantic, as if studded with diamonds, sapphires, and emeralds, sparkled far as the distant horizon before us, as we prepared for our bath. We were soon breasting the bright ripples which,

breaking in dreamy stillness upon the beach, marked the advance of the tide with a line of white foam that

“Scarcely surpassed the froth of your champagne.”

My adversary, (for he had not made a dozen strokes when it became manifest to me he was bent on mischief) was a fine swimmer, *au fait* to the art, and possessing uncommon power and buoyancy in the water. With lusty vigour, he stood out gallantly to sea, while I watched his progress and purpose in a spirit that put thews and sinews to the test.

I could swim well; better than all with whom I had previously tried my pretension; and consequently, with the advantage that confidence always bestows, like a jockey in a waiting race, I lay close to him, with the conviction that I could go by at my pleasure. Away we stretched, neither speaking a word, fast as arms could ply; and eager and elastic boundings win for us a passage. Once I threw a glance back, and felt my heart beat quicker

as the indistinctness of objects on the land told how far we had left it behind.

The stream of flood, too, setting with great rapidity to the southward, had carried us much below the point from which we started ; still we held our way silently, and with the quiet energy of those who, having taken a desperate resolution, were as desperately carrying it out.

From a window of the hotel, two or three men were following our course with their telescopes, as I afterwards learnt. Once or twice, a hurried exclamation escaped them, as the distance that separated us from the shore was rapidly increased, and at length each began to express his feelings and his fears.

My host was the first to break silence. “ What *are* those two fools about,” he began, in an uneasy tone : “ surely—bless my soul !—surely, that Englishman never can mean to——. Good God ! I hardly see their heads. Impossible—drown a companion—but, Lord save me !—can any body see them now?—

Where are the two little black spots? I can make out nothing. Oh! it's horrible!"

"Here they come," cried the best look-out of the party; "they're making for home; but the tide will carry them as low as the bridge of Bundrows: let us go."

About the time that our friends on shore began to converse, the silence of those afloat was first broken.

"By Heaven! I can *not* shake him off." A —— muttered to himself, "He swims stronger than I do: stronger? there is no strength left in me."

"Come," said I, "this is going too far; let us make for shore: the result of this contest shall be a secret that I will never divulge."

"You have saved my life," was the reply, with which he turned his face to the land; "these waves should have covered me for ever, sooner than I would have had it known that you had beaten me."

The return was effected; but even now the memory of the wild death-struggle with which

one, at least, accomplished it, sends the blood back to my heart. We joined the breakfast party, but not in the mood characteristic of either.

I remained on the banks of Loch Melville till the middle of August, and no day arrived of which A —— did not pass the greater part with me. He had a fine heart, but, with sorrow I say it, hopelessly, irrecoverably, “warped to wrong.” He wooed and won the maiden so nearly the unconscious heroine of a tragedy ; but their lives were not happy. Their story was a sad one ; its moral, plain, and peremptory : who would make account of a life, wherein youth, beauty, love, and ease, could not secure happiness for their possessor !

Leaving the prospects of grouse-shooting behind me, I returned to the metropolis. All were on the *qui vive* in anticipation of the visit of George the Fourth. The streets seemed as if some vast masquerade was being celebrated. Here you met a dandy with the skirts of his coat suspended, as it were, from his shoulder-blades, and the abdominal pro-

minence of his "cossacks" giving to his person the appearance of one "as ladies wish to be who love their lords;" and there, a savage from the deserts of Connemara, or the wild isles of Arran, naked and natural as it had pleased Providence to make him.

Even at Goulding's auction, matters were strictly in keeping. There was Goulding himself, with his nose advanced from pink to purple, and Barney, as usual, "oiling a screw;" the steed with double the ordinary quid of ginger beneath his tail, and the rider with thrice his usual allowance of whisky under his waistcoat. I felt, as the scene passed before me, as one does on a first visit to Bedlam.

At length the royal visitor was announced to have taken his departure from the Welsh coast, and, *en masse*, all Ireland hastened to Dunleary (since named Kingstown) to give him welcome. I was invited to witness the arrival, on board a cutter, commanded by a son of Sir John Read — Lieutenant Read — who had the custody of the moorings prepared

for the royal yachts, and commanded the crew of the royal barge.

There never was so pleasant a dinner discussed in old Neptune's dominions. There were the syren Stephens, on her proper domain; her cousin of the silver notes, Miss Johnstone; Duruset, who sang like a bird escaped from a cage; and a colony of ultra good ones. But the king came not, having shaped his course for Howth; so, the feast concluded, the royal barge, steered by Read in full dress, with his fore-and-aft hat mounted, and the rowers, in state costume, was ordered alongside, to put us ashore.

As we approached the jetty, the anxious crowds upon it at once recognised the royal set-out. Deafening shouts from ten thousand brazen throats hailed our approach. The hint was, in an instant, taken by our gleesome company; a boat-cloak was thrown around me, and a travelling-cap upon my head. We reached the shore; all arose as I passed majestically to the landing-place; and then, having themselves also landed, they walked

backwards up the slip. Cheers rent the empyrean : Duruset bowed to the earth ; the Stephens made obeisances at which the Graces might have blushed ; in half an hour all Dublin rang with the arrival of the king !!!

Such was my last scene in Ireland in 1821.

END OF VOL. I.

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